



築地俊彦
Illustration / NOCO

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陽炎、抜錨します!



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Kantai Collection - Kankore - Kagerou, Batsubyou Shimasu! - Volume 01 Chapter 01- 04

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Chapter 1 (First Moon)

First Moon

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Kagerou strained her eyes.

The waves were calm but the weather was partially cloudy. It's the opposite of "The weather is clear with some high tide." [\[1\]](#). Although it isn't something as serious as the fight.

Is there any sign of the enemy right in front. The Abyssal Fleet may suddenly appear, so caution is a necessity. That is why the girls have the importance of observation hammered into them even if it seems like it's nothing. During the time they were unprepared, a Battleship class just had to appear, during the time they failed to notice, 16 inch shells just had to come down on them. The examples of those being negligent on lookout then disappeared to a watery grave are too many to mention.

Their name is the Abyssal Fleet. They came out of nowhere to wreak havoc on the seas, mankind's greatest enemy.

No one knows when they appeared. In reality it is better to say that they were found to exist incidentally. The Abyssal Fleet obliterated any ship that came in their way, smashing the sea lanes into pieces. Uncountable ships were sunk and destroyed, disappearing into the depth of the sea.

There was nothing that could fight against them. No, other than the girls, there was nothing that could.

They are the Fleet girls. Those who were rushed into the sea to oppose the Abyssal Fleet equipped with armaments, the guardians who would grasp victory for mankind. Fleet girls are hard boiled chosen maidens, a title worthy of pride.

Even within those Fleet girls, Kagerou is a notably small, very agile and resolute

Destroyer Fleet Girl.

She clutched her newly equipped binoculars, once again fixating her gaze to her front.

There was nothing but quietly shimmering blue sea. There is nothing. Perhaps nothing.

As a Destroyer Fleet Girl, she must not be careless. She was way different from the cruisers with their loaded seaplanes and the battleships that remained fine after getting hit by two or three shells. Her only way of scouting are her two eyes and if by any chance, she got hit from point blank range, she would be history. To act with extreme caution is a must.

Her two feet planted on the sea surface, slightly trembled.

Her anxiety also affects her feet. Usually she would never be this anxious, only for today the circumstances were different. The two main machines that she was wearing on her feet like shoes fit her well but time and time again they let out a coughing sound. The one in charge of maintenance was being stingy when oiling it. Thanks to that, her feelings came spreading out into growing unease in her heart. If only she prepared it herself, this kind of thing wouldn't have happened, but due to her own foolishness, she overslept. When she remembered sleeping with the taste of last night's sweet red bean soup she ate last night, she was in this mess.

"Please be a liliittle bit quieter okay."

She hushed the main machine with a whisper. Then she muttered, "Both sides advance forward, half speed."

Like skating, she could feel her body moving forward.

Wind washed over her head. She knew how the ribbon on her head fluttered. So refreshing, it felt good. Even just a moment, the worry in her heart was forgotten.

Realizing, Kagerou shook her head. There is no time to be at ease. Even if she looked like this, she is the name ship of the Kagerou Class. Her bright cheerful and forward looking feature is her plus point. She couldn't lose sight of the main objective.

Once again, continuing the watch anew, her eyes were on the look out.

The water surface in front of her bubbles. It's still far in front of her but she could discern that the sea surface changed, looking like it was boiling. Then the whole area changed color.

Black hulls with fangs bearing mouths. The eyes were round but insect-like, in but a glance, it's easy to know that it isn't anything close to human.

In numbers almost uncountable, they spread out across the horizon.

The moment she saw them, Kagerou shouted.

"Abyssal Fleet insight! Such great numbers! Mmm.. It's like that "7 part enemy against 3 part sea" thing! [\[2\]](#) The sea is colored black by the enemies!"

The reply via the radio was fast.

[Huh? Kagerou, what are you talking about?]

"I said, It's 7 part enemy against 3 part seas!"

[Don't assume it. Give an exact number]

"It's extremely high! Really!"

Although her partner on the radio, Shiranui, was composed as always, here she felt like foaming from her mouth. It's not like she was using the popular lines to show off. That phrase was the only thing in her mind when they appeared in that number. It looked like salmon going upstream, but the enemy just isn't that cute.

They swam with a splashing sound. The correct term is sailing but the Fleet Girls called that "swimming". Their eye colors remain drowned in darkness. If it was battle time, those eyes turn blue. Upon being agitated, humans will have bloodshot eyes, but for these creatures it was the opposite.

Kagerou decided she could do it. Issuing a R Side signal (120 degree clockwise), she changed her course to be by the side of the Abyssal Fleet. Shiranui's emotionless reply was right. If the enemy has yet to notice her, it is imperative to give an exact number.

One by one she began to count.

“Enemy, eight I-class destroyer! Sixteen Ro-class! Ha-class...”

The one who first decided the Abyssal Fleet class names to be I Ro Ha of the Japanese syllabify order was either a genius or a drunken man, there is not much of a difference. It’s more nifty than the AIUEO order but at times it is easy to get confused and mess it up.

Just when she is about to reach a total count of thirty, suddenly the eyes of the Abyssal Fleet lit up. From pitch black into blue. The blazing lights reflected on the sea surface were astonishingly clear to see. With that all together, Kagerou scowled at the sight.

“They found me out! Shiranui—”

At the moment she said it, the hull of the Abyssal Fleet sparked. Kagerou involuntarily swallowed down her words.

“.... enemy fleet, firing!”

Overhead, shells came falling.

“Kyaaaaa!!”

Pillars of water rose up around her.

“Alright... that is enough.”

Pi—. The sound of buzzer echoed around the Kure bay area.

“Practice is over.”

The dummies that make up the figure of the Abyssal Fleet were collected while still being connected to strings. On the sea surface where Kagerou had been standing, many logs drifted about as substitutes to enemy shells. Being hit by them wouldn’t kill you, but it would still hurt. It looks like an after show skit, it’s shameful.

“Kagerou, please come up.”

Clad in orange uniform was Jintsuu, who shouted by a hand mike. Beside her was the one in charge of radio communications, her accomplice Shiranui.

With water trickling down from her head, Kagerou muttered “Okay...” as she moved closer to the pier.

Heaving, she got up. The armaments were heavy and her drenched clothes makes it even heavier. Her mood also weighed quite some amount.

Jintsuu was already waiting at that place.

Jintsuu dropped her eyes to the notepad she has in her hand.

“Let’s see... for this practice... the result isn’t good, I see... Until the sighting of the Abyssal Fleet, there was a one and a half second delay, and even after sighting, the report is inaccurate... that’s unusual.” Jintsuu’s eyes flickered up to meet Kagerou’s.

“Is there any kind of anxiety you are having?”

“Ee....”

Upon hearing Kagerou’s reply, Jintsuu appeared saddened.

“Or is it because of my leadership? Like I made a mistake, ending up in putting you into a difficult situation.”

“N-No, no, it’s not like that.”

“I am after all but a second ship of the Sendai Class. I’m much too different from the energetic Kagerou Class.”

“It’s not like that! It’s not!”

Kagerou profusely denied. There was not a moment where Jintsuu’s leadership was in the wrong. Kagerou believed that her improvement in training up until now was all thanks to her.

“Well, then that’s the truth.”

“Yes.”

“Then... whose fault is this?”

Said Jintsuu, inclining her head.

Kagerou stumbled on her words. It’s because of this the young lady before her was scary. She completely saw through her heart. In one moment she said that it was her leadership at fault, then by earning the denial she continued by pressing onto the real matter. It’s a single ship practice so it couldn’t be other’s fault. Although it’s slightly cloudy but the field of vision is satisfactory so the weather

couldn't be blamed either. Kagerou confessed honestly.

"It's... myself."

"Why is that?"

"My attention is a bit taken by what will happen tomorrow."

Kagerou gave a small laugh. Intending it to be a shy laugh.

She didn't get scolded but warned.

"That won't do, if that's how it is. If you are not careful, the Abyssal Fleet may destroy you, and if you got distracted the whole fleet might be wiped out."

Then, Jintsuu continued to add.

"If you're ordered to be a escort ship, what should you do? It's a situation where you have to find the enemies at the foremost and attack them. Scouting is the basis of everything. Don't leave everything to the recon seaplane, you also have to have the strong determination to find the Abyssal Fleet yourself."

"Yes..."

"Very well. Well then, Kagerou-san, with this your training in Kure is over. From tomorrow on you will be posted to Yokosuka. Please do it properly okay."

Jintsuu smiled.

"Because after all, destroyers are our pride."

"Yes!"

With a more spirited voice, Kagerou gave a salute.

After bidding farewell to Jintsuu who had left the pier, she let out a sigh.

Having her attention being distracted as an excuse couldn't be helped but there was a reason for that. From tomorrow on Kagerou will be leaving Kure Naval Base that she had grown accustomed to for Yokosuka Naval Base. Because of this thought in her head, every since the morning she had been restless. The order to change placement came around yesterday. Originally it wasn't supposed to be that sudden, but somewhere within the organization it got held up and with the delay the documents didn't arrived until the very last moment. Thanks to that she didn't even have time for some reluctant parting with her

friends, at the very least she only had herself promising to “It’s near Tokyo so send us something nice!”. When she thought about it, personnel replacement of Fleet Girls may only be the government conspiracy to empty the wallet of the girls and prevent them from going anywhere.

Although as a replacement of a farewell gift, she was treated to sweet bean soup and ate until her stomach was full. This, however, has its own demerits.

Jintsuu as well, said “then shall we celebrate the placement change” then lent her hand for training until the very end. This was also a form of love, is what Kagerou believed.

It’s just, in this spacious pier only Kagerou and Shiranui were the only ones left.

Although it’s just the two of them, or maybe it’s for the two of them, just like always Shiranui regarded her curtly.

“Taking the first transport to Yoko Base is quite hasty, isn’t it.”

Shiranui tilted her neck.

“I wonder of the reason.”

“It’s because the new type of destroyer is energetic. They want it over there as well.”

“Ahahaha,” Kagerou laughed.

By the order of recency, it has been decided that after the Kagerou Class is the Yuugumo Class.

The girl’s armaments were practically sparkling. They were equipped with a set of 12.7 cm guns and quad torpedo tubes. The torpedo tubes were loaded with assorted torpedoes capable of sinking a ship in one hit. These weapons were new, and it will prove to be reliable in a real battle. It’s unfortunate that she had to leave Kure for the assignment in Yokosuka but it has been decided for the arrangements on immediate transfer.

“They are really in a great need for me, eh. It must be so.”

“Kagerou’s great vigor and forward looking feature is certainly an advantageous charm. Even Yokosuka might have a need of that.”

“Does that mean rather than my ability it’s more for someone to liven up the atmosphere, isn’t it?”

“I believe it isn’t something as elegant as that.”

“Hey!”

In contrast with the banter, Kagerou laughed.

“I wonder what kind of place Yokosuka is. It must be as spacious as Kure.”

“Probably it is fussy about sticking to regulations. It’s not good to say “finally I meet you” informally right after a change in placement. Getting scolded for fooling around seems to have been the drill in Tokyo Bay.”

“Uwaa, that sounds strict, as expected of Yokosuka”

To Kagerou who stiffened her shoulders in fright, Shiranui said, “Aa, it’s the ‘your guidance, your encouragement...” thing.”

“With that, there won’t be any instance of suddenly getting reprimanded. At least compared to Kagerou’s casual talk.

Since it seems legit, it has been decided for Kagerou to use it.

“What doesn’t Shiranui come over to YokoBase?”

“Shiranui is comfortable with Kure’s waters.”

Shiranui before her is also a Kagerou-class, her armament is also the same. She’s a friend that underwent practice alongside her. To be separated with her, that alone was deplorable.

“How lonely. The parting with the other is also kinda off.”

“It can’t be helped.”

There were also other destroyers that trained under Jintsuu. Perhaps because they went all out for yesterday’s farewell party, right now their figures were nowhere to be seen. It must be either they are studying hard in the classroom, or lounging around drinking ramune.

Shiranui destroyed the imagery with a cold tone.

“Even on the other side, there are also other Fleet Girls. They are also the same

comrades. I am sure you can get along well.”

“It’d be nice if there is a lovely girl like Shiranui.”

“.... I wonder about that.”

She turned away. This emotionless girl, it seemed that just for a little bit her face blushed.

Kagerou turned her eyes to the sea. The sky of Kure is so high, the waves of Seto inland Sea were calm. Far away beyond this, she wondered how it is in the Miura peninsula. There Yokosuka is waiting for her.

She returned her gaze.

“Well then. Tomorrow I have to go early.”

“Yes.”

“I will write you letters from there, okay.”

“Not needed.”

“Hey!”

With Kagerou’s protest, Shiranui replied emotionless.

“Kidding.”

“Oh please.”

“Kagerou as well, please don’t cry and wail because Shiranui isn’t there. You are also forbidden from shooting your ally, or taking other people’s snacks, or throwing yourself off Kannonzaki peninsula all because you’re lonely.”

“I won’t do that!” shouted Kagerou. From tomorrow on, they won’t be able to hold this kind of conversation anymore.

With the insecurities welling up in her heart, Kagerou hugged Shiranui tightly. An act done quite spontaneously.

“Goodbye, Shiranui.”

“Yes.”

Shiranui also slowly hugged her back. With a bit more force than Kagerou.

“Be safe.”

At Kure Naval base where human figures began to disappear, they embraced each other.

Their 12.7cm gun mount hit one another, creating a sound similar to a ringing bell.



Kagerou felt that she shouldn't be looked down upon.

If on the first day of arrival she replied with a stupid response, they would make fun of her and she would remain inferior for the rest of her life. She shouldn't let people think that “this village girl from Kure is eating so much oyster her head is going nuts”. Kure might have been a splendid port but Yokosuka is even bigger.

Just by being a naval base in itself, there is the pride of being the base of Tokyo Bay.

While using the connecting train from Kure, all thanks to sleeping, she missed her station and upon realizing it, she hurriedly jumped off the train. This time she rode in the wrong bus and only after she arrived at Kurihama however, in confusion she retraced her path. She asked an elderly and when she walked to the direction they pointed, she found herself by an unbelievable cliff, then after thinking really hard she realized she must have been mistaken as a tourist. While trying to somehow make it by her own strength and half wanting to cry, she finally arrived. By then she was drenched in sweat.

When she checked the time, it was surprising how she arrived earlier than the appointed time. Fleet Girls had been drilled that no what the case, they had to mobilize themselves five minutes earlier, however in Kagerou's case even if it's far from five minutes, she had intended to arrived two hours earlier. The waiting time had reduced significantly but the fact that she was on time still had not change.

A bronze signboard with [Yokosuka Naval Base] written on it hang by the front gate. Of course because it was a port, the place faced to the sea, but there is no way that she'd come in by swimming then making her landing there. That is why, the most common way will be to use the gate to get inside.

The equipment was being delivered by separate post so it's almost the same as going in empty handed. It was forbidden for Fleet Girls to move on land with their equipment on. According to a plausible reasoning, if they got into the public transportation with their shells and torpedoes still equipped as is, panic would occur.

Kagerou stood still. First, she had to get in then report about her post to the admiral. She checked if her uniform is disheveled. It's hard to say that she looks neat. Thanks to her going here and there previously. For the time being, she stretched out the wrinkles by her skirt, straightening the necktie before her breast, and brushing off any dust.

With this, it's supposed to work out somehow. From clothes discordance, the Fleet Girls' own discordance could be seen. Even if she might have being teased by bluffs, supposedly there would be no chance for her to be made fun of. Breathing out, she passed the gate. To the soldier who was stationed at the gate, she showed her identification papers.

The gate guard was a gorilla looking male, with gorilla looking physique. However, upon seeing her identification card, as if taking off on a flight he quickly gave a salute.

"Please come in!"

Fleet Girls are respected as much as they are feared. They were the only ones that could rescue mankind, everyone knows it. With her mood somewhat turning good, Kagerou walked into the premises. As expected of Yokosuka, even

at the guard gate, they were attentive to discipline. It was also an important issue in Kure, but there the voice was a little smaller.

So as to not block the cars running around, she walked by the edge of the road, and finally after many turns, she found the building pointed by the guide.

“... it’s here, right.”

Kagerou said to herself. The said building was small. Or rather, poor. No matter how one saw it, it looks prefabricated, and on top of that, it’s still in the middle of construction. Perhaps it is more appropriate to say that it’s in the shape of a hut.

Is this really the admiral’s office? She was about to think that she was wrong, but no matter how she thought of it, it was right. However, did she really have to deliver her placement report here?

With the construction still going on, this must only be a temporary building. Yes, let’s leave it at that.

A case of insecurity; the door was left opened. Kagerou stood in right in front of the door, saying, “Kagerou, coming in!” then after doing a ten degree bow [\[3\]](#), she walked in.

“Kagerou Class Destroyer, Kagerou. From 0900 today, I will take up the post in Yokosuka Naval Base! I beg of your guidance, and you encoura—”

Just when she was finally saying the borrowed lines from Shiranui, she couldn’t say it until the end.

The room was empty.

Kagerou stared dumbfounded at the room that had not a single person inside.

Before her eyes, there was only a table with blue tablecloth spread on top, but not a soul existed. By the wall there was a hanging scroll with the words “Marine Escort”, but there’s no way that anyone had ever said that line.

(.... As I thought, I came to the wrong place?)

No, no, supposedly it is not. The room was here and she had also properly informed of the time she take post. Then, why is that no one was around.

It is either no one was around, or that they ran away outside from the window with the hanging teruterubozu. From there she could clearly see the port of

Yokosuka.

Right at that time, there was a loud voice.

“Take shelter! Go take shelter!”

Just as she thought eh what? what?, outside people started to run, scattering about like spider offsprings. Kagerou watched, going “pokaaaaan” as her mind went blank.

A while later.

“Byuuuruu byuuuruu byuuuruu” sound came. Just as she absentmindedly thought, “ah, that sounds like shells...”, suddenly the ceiling exploded.

“Kyaaaaa!!”

Kagerou was thrown by the impact. The wall collapsed, tumbling over to the outside.

“What the?! What?! what?!”

She literally got up as her eyes turned. The prefabricated building that existed until a while ago had been completely destroyed. The “Marine Escort” hanging scroll was blown by the wind and fell on Kagerou’s head.

When she took it off her head, before her she saw a girl gathering mass.

“Oh, come on, how could it be this bad. Where is the girl who directly hit Admiral’s home office with 12.7cm gun?”

Isn’t that a Fleet girl’s equipment, thought Kagerou. Since it’s a 12.7 cm, the it must be equipped by a Destroyer.

Although it’s called a 12.7 cm gun mount, in reality it’s not like the barrel is 127 mm. It’s a name that meant the firepower it has is comparable to that amount. In addition, a 12.7 cm gun is classified as small gun. Because it’s something to be equipped by Destroyers, it can’t be too big.

Even then, lucky that just now it was only a 12.7 cm, and that it blew up midair. If that was the 41 cm used by battleships, it would be inexcusable to say it was just another explosion.

That being said, to have the home office of the admiral be fired at, is not a

common occurrence.

“Where’s the girl!”

The girl in front, shouted until her face turned red at the group of girls in front of her.

“She’s not here,” a reply said. “She has gone somewhere.”

“Go find her. If you can’t find her within one hour, none of you will receive your meals!”

The girls flustered then started to run about.

The girl who gave the order was still mad. For that reason, Kagerou found a little bit of courage to call out.

“Excuse me.”

“Yes?”

The girl finally noticed Kagerou.

Blue cap with blue uniform. White scarf to her breast. Within one glance, it is easy to know that she is a Heavy Cruiser Fleet Girl. Her height was tall, with kind features. However, from what she had said earlier, it is known that she could be scary when she is mad.

The girl scrutinized Kagerou from top to bottom.

“Ah, a destroyer. I’ve never seen your face before.”

“I am the first ship of Kagerou class, Kagerou. From today, I will be taking post in Yokosuka Naval Ba...”

“Aa, my apologies. The girl who contacted us from Kure, right.”

Without letting Kagerou finish her sentence, the young woman raised her hand lightly in interruption.

“My name is Takao. I’m the first ship of Takao Class. The second ship is also in Yoko Base so I guess you’ll eventually meet her. I’m in charge of practice and far away excursions with the battleships. Pleased to meet you.”

“Yes...”

Since she is a heavy cruiser, she must have sortied with together with the battleships and the carriers, at times functioning as the flagship.

That aside, what big breasts. The uniform could barely hold them in. She wondered if there was any kind of regulations that says unless you have big breasts you won't be able to become heavy cruisers.

"Then, is Takao-san my flagship...."

"I'm not. You're a destroyer, aren't you?"

"Yes. If so, then I..."

"More importantly, see."

Takao firmly grabbed Kagerou's shoulders.

"Will you help me search for that girl?"

"... who is this about?"

"Just now, the one who just shelled this office, that idiot— no, that unique Fleet Girl. In just this month it's already the third time. Every time getting shelled, the admiral always sulked and went to be spoiled at by the carrier dorm, you know. Last week the admiral had a change of heart and went to the battleship dorm, and then the lady from carrier division came out complaining. All the time it's always me who's on the short end of the stick, okay."

"Yes."

With a voice still in shock from what had been happening numerous times, Kagerou stood up. What's up with this naval base.

"And so with that, please help . That girl, this time I will moored her with a bowline knot so that she can't move."

"For that, who am I supposed to look for?"

"An impertinent destroyer with slanted eyes. You will know right away."

"What's the ship name?"

With this, Takao finally told Kagerou the warship's name.

"Akebono."

Yokosuka naval base is big. Kure, having a different duty as it concentrates on training, pales in comparison in size. Before her departure, her other Fleet Girl comrades told her harshly “It’s unfortunate that it’s Yokosuka” “the strictness there can’t be compared with Kure” “Going abroad is still better”. No matter how you put it, those were all just sentences thrown based on imagination but since she had nothing to object with, the only thing she could do was listen.

It’s not that she really had no basic conjecture, Yokosuka Naval Base was constantly being said as a base built especially to fight the Abyssal Fleet, thus there was a sense of urgency in it.

That was how it was supposedly.

Why in the world am I in the middle of manhunt now, thought Kagerou. That may be because she is a Destroyer that specializes in search investigation or rescue, but isn’t it strange to right away, use someone who has just changed posts. Thanks to that, without even a tour, she was stuck walking around searching.

On that note, what it means by “tour” here is, the act of accompanying the newly appointed Fleet Girl all around the Naval Base for her to remember the position of the facilities. If one couldn’t remember where a facilities exists and what it does after one round, she could get scolded at.

Without a tour, it’s similar as being a lost girl herself. She wondered in what way could she even search.

“Since it’s a Naval Base the same as Kure, the facilities are supposed to be the same...”

Kagerou muttered in her mouth.

For example, if she were to shell the Admiral’s office and then create a commotion, after that where would she go?

Usually in a serial killer style, one will run into the depth of the mountain, or carry their equipment over to coral island to escape. If it’s in the southern area, there are many small islands that seem unknown to everyone, it’s possible to pull off a Robinson Crusoe lifestyle.

However, with the way Takao said it, until now there had been several

shellings. With that in mind, the idea of going to the south on the contrary sounds unlikely. Just to be sure, she stretched her back and looked around the bay area but there wasn't any Fleet Girls' wake.

With that, let's assume she's still on land. Maybe in the military equipment storage. Ah no, there is a guard there. Then, what about the dock? Over there, there's also the previous visitor so there is no meaning. Port task division quarantine building. It's possible to be threatened by, "do you want to be infected by a kind of pathogen?" so it's a no. Bay area degassing facility. If you hide in that kind of facility it's the same as saying goodbye.

She imagined what she would do if it was her. During time when she pilfered ramune and bananas from the cafeteria then was discovered by the one in charge of weekly duty, she concealed herself until the floor of the lecture hall. When she was caught bringing in packed ohagi and peaches and got chased for excessive rations, she pretended to be the one in charge of repairs from the Construction department. By the way, it's not like she did all of this solely because she wanted to. It was for Shiranui who caught a cold had wanted them.

(but I wonder if she would hide in such an obvious place...)

If the one who hid is a pro, the one who searched should also be a pro. Especially Destroyer Fleet Girls, who will welcome searching for anything whether on the sea or on the land. No matter which Naval Base, battles around towels or notes borrowed from the battleships or heavy cruisers or even underwear, is an everyday occurrence.

Once more, she remembered what Takao had said a while ago. Just within this month, it's the third time. Then that means she had already been found out two times. Most likely she was in a place easy to find. Why was she in a place easy to find. Perhaps she wants someone to search for her. However for that part she must not have done it with no goal in mind. She should have wanted to know the movement from this side as well. As far as it is concerned.

"Maybe there."

The girl ran towards a building near her field of vision.

A three-story western building in brick colored. Within the many modern architectural building, its color used for exterior appearance is clearly

distinguishable from the others.

It's a Yokosuka Naval Base Government Office building.

Kagerou gave a bow in a hurry before she went in. It's a good thing that she saw no one, she ran up the stairs skipping one staircase in each leap.

She got out into the rooftop. This place is used to hoist flags, so it's not that spacious.

Right there was a lone Fleet Girl.

A classic looking Sailor uniform with a blue ribbon tie. Her long hair was tied by the right side of her head, a bell on her hair clip. The profile of her side face is childish, for a certainty her expression wasn't pleasant, as she gave a tense impression.

Kagerou was convinced that this girl was Akebono.

Without facing Kagerou, Akebono took out a pocket watch from her breast pocket.

"... Ten minutes. Hmph. Until now this is the fastest, aren't you.."

Her wording, really gave the feeling of making fun of others.

"All the others are being incompetent, but at least you learn a bit huh. For cruisers and destroyer this is preferable."

The girl turned around. After that she made a puzzled expression.

"... who are you."

"Kagerou." – Was how she replied. Akebono seemed to be even more puzzled.

"Kagerou as in, the first ship of Kagerou class? What business you have with me?"

"Because from today I change posts here..."

'Yoroshiku' is what she wanted to say but Akebono wasn't in the mood for some greetings.

Openly, Kagerou was barraged with suspicious stares.

"Then what for did you come here?"

Against such contentious way of talking, Kagerou answered as she remembered the confusion.

“I was told to search for you. The other fleet girls are being told that they won't get any meals if they don't find you, you know.”

“You can just ignore it. Since at best all destroyer can do is just making uproar and going here and there in confusion and be useless.”

“Aren't you yourself a destroyer?”

“So?”

Akebono threw a glare. Kagerou unsure of what to say.

“..... well.”

“If it's 'changed post' that means you come from Kure or Sasebo, right. At best you must have failed on something and got thrown here. It's must be one of those, either you screwed up in your lookout and got done in by a dive bomber, or you got wrecked by salvos. Once again those frauds pushed the scraps here, it's getting crowded.”

Rather than getting mad, Kagerou was bewildered. Just who is this Fleet Girl who since a while ago say nothing but abusing others.

“Mere Destroyers can't be used to fight against the Abyssal Fleet anyway, so it's better for you to just retire right away. Not getting any post is the same as getting drowned right away anyway. Well, after sinking, there's still scratching your name from the register so there are two steps labor of official papers, so discontinuing right away is better.”

Kagerou attempted to somehow give rebuttals to those statements fully loaded with spite.

“A.... I come here to properly fight, you know.”

“Ha? Fighting with Abyssal Fleet as an enemy are words that only battleships and carriers used you know.”

Akebono gave a mocking laughter.

“If we're talking about what destroyer do, it's either escorting expedition, or

being expendables for escaping the battles. From the very beginning, there are no expectations out of us.”

“Without auxiliary vessel, there can’t be any battles!”

“That was too bad. Being the outrider in a fleet is not a leading role. If you wanna say what Destroyers do, they don’t expect anything more than being expendables. Those cruisers are all thinking like that.”

“That’s not true!”

Kagerou shouted. At Kure, the light cruiser girls were all gentle, valuing them. Especially Jintsuu, as kind as she is strict, saying, “Destroyers are our pride.”

“Destroyers are not useless!”

“Oooh, yes, you are right. Around the level of finding me, its still a role, right.”

Too snappish there is no way to get the conversation along with her.

Pissed off, Kagerou mouthed a “he”. If it’s going to be like this, she would have practice foul words. To begin with, in Kure there were no such perverse Kanmusu so there had never been any need to practice it. Her partner Shiranui, being cool, calm, and collected, may appeared cynical but she would never say any upfront foul words.

It’s obvious but Akebono has not a single care in Kagerou’s circumstances.

“... I’m going to bring you with me.”

It came out low, akin to a groan.

“Since if I don’t, I will also get dragged into skipping meals.”

“It’s better if you lessen your eating you know, it counts as diet.”

“I’m not getting fat!”

She forcibly grabbed Akebono’s arm.

“We’re going!”

“Uwa, how rude. So the rumour about Kagerou Class being all brawn and no brain is true.”

“Shut up!”

Trying her best so as not to let her face be seen, Kagerou pulled Akebono.

Kagerou brought Akebono to Takao. While Akebono continue badmouthing her, she didn't give any resistance.

"I brought her."

"Thanks for your hard work. So it's true that those in the Kagerou class are fast."

Takao was impressed. Remaining disappointed, Kagerou bowed.

"With this, I will excuse my self."

"Aah, wait. Take her too."

The "her" of course meant Akebono. Kagerou gave a baffled expression.

"Is it to detention?"

"Unfortunately for that, a while ago the admiral left an instruction to deal with this as something irrelevant."

"Haa? She shelled the Admiral's office, you know?!"

"Our admiral, is not only a masochist, but also loves fireworks so it seems like that person was watching it from somewhere else. And said something along the line of the spark of the explosion was beautiful, so she's innocent."

Kagerou thought, "so irresponsible". Normally, without fail it would end up with the equipment being dismantled. The Fleet Girl herself would undergo trial then sent to Kurihama penitentiary. That aside, before there could be any wrongdoing done, Kagerou didn't want to be with this Destroyer girl.

"Then, I don't know about the destination but as long as I take her along it's enough, right?"

"There's still more. There's a notice for you. I wonder where it went...."

Takao turned over a bundle of documents she had in her hand, making ruffling sounds.

"Here it is. Let's see, Kagerou of Kagerou Class is appointed to be on command of the destroyers listed below. Fourteenth Destroyer Division."

With her mouth, Kagerou repeated the present notice. 14... 14... she had never heard of it. Did such fleet exist?

“In case of embezzlement is it Fourteen?”

“I wonder. I guess it was decided by darts or something like.”

Seemingly to have no idea about it, Takao gave a nonchalant answer.

Based on ministerial ordinance, the destroyers division in Yokosuka Naval Base was decided to be from One up until Ten. For Fourteen to exist in Yokosuka is nearing exceptional.

Ten series was allocated for destroyer of Kure. Kagerou thought maybe because she was from Kure, it turned it Fourteen. Or if other reason exist.

“Somehow it sounds like a fleet for leftovers, isn’t it.”

“You understand it very well, huh.”

“Please don’t say something unpleasant. Other than me, who are they?”

Takao pointed to the one beside Kagerou.

“There she is.”

“She?”

“There.”

Kagerou didn’t understand what Takao was saying. No, actually she comprehend it. It’s just that she didn’t want to believe it. Because she is the newly produced Kagerou Class that she got called to Yokosuka. She thought that wouldn’t go through something unreasonable.

She gingerly looked beside her, then turned her face back.

“It can’t possibly be... with Akebono.....?”

“Yes.”

Kagerou jumped.

“Uuuuuuu this is a lie, right?!”

“Why would I tell you a lie? Weren’t you the one saying things about leftovers?”

“I can’t believe that it’s true....”

“I thought that Kure Base fleet girls have good reasoning.”

As if to end it, Takao circled the documents.

Clinging on, Kagerou said forcefully.

“L-Lead ship, who is the lead ship?! It’s Takao-san right?!”

“You.”

“Eeeeeee?!”

“The lead ship for the Fourteenth Destroyer Division is Kagerou.”

“Kyaaaaaaaa!!!”

The lead ship is the one in charge of giving commands and directions to the destroyers. Normally it is assigned to the light cruisers, who has better speed and communication abilities. For a destroyer to be assigned as one is an exception under exceptional circumstances.

To the flabbergasted Kagerou, Takao continued.

“Until now there has been a number of people trying to lead Akebono and failed. I am temporarily in charge, but finally I’m relieved of the position.”

“That’s why, someone like me...”

“You now, the admiral said that because she came from Kure she’ll be able to do it.”

She had never heard of such a thing. If only by coming from Hiroshima one could lead, then by now the stars would have been either Carp or Sanfrecce. [\[4\]](#)

Assaulted by dizziness, Kagerou felt like sitting down. With a relieved expression, Takao began to chatter.

“I feel like a burden has been lifted off my shoulders. Somehow the sea looks more blue than it usually is, don’t you think?”

“For me it doesn’t look much different than a ditch...”

“There are still other girls in the Fourteenth Destroyer Division, it’ll be good to search for them. Please get along.”

After saying that, Takao left while saying, “Perhaps I shall party with canned beef today.”

After that, only the two Kanmusu was left.

Kagerou took a peek beside her with a sidelong glance. The Kanmusu with a foul mouth and attitude, seemed to look bored.

After a while, Akebono talked to herself.

“..... pulled out the bad number huh.”

“Aren’t you understanding.”

Just when Kagerou was about to think how surprisingly honest Akebono was, the later glared at her.

“It’s about me!”

Kagerou instantly shouted, “Shut up you stinking idiot!”

What’s up with this bad mannered destroyer. Despite hearing that there are many good girls in Ayanami class, this brat is way lower than the lowest of the lows. Who would even want to get along. It would have preferred if she just got hit by a skip-bomb and sunk in the Solomon sea.

Akebono had no idea about what was going on in Kageoru’s heart. Her figure already disappeared.

Translator’s Notes and References

1. [↑](#) Often said in weather forecast, if I am not mistaken.
2. [↑](#) It’s a popular phrase in a movie “the Battle of Okinawa” said by a watchman when American warships filled the horizon. And been used in anime and such ever since. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Okinawa_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Okinawa_(film)))
3. [↑](#) a bow done by bending your upper body about 10 degree to the front while keeping your head straight with your body, as written in Japan SDF guide
4. [↑](#) both are professional baseball team from Hiroshima

Chapter 2 (Second Moon)

Second Moon

The admiral is the most esteemed person in the Naval Base, and also the person who supervise and leads Fleet Girls. Currently, rather than calling by “Admiral”, most of the destroyer fleet girls calls with “Commander”. Kagerou at times did so as well, at time she didn’t.

With the affiliation with Fourteen Destroyer Division being true, Kagerou’s hope of it being a mistake has been shattered to pieces. When she gave her report of taking the post anew, the first thing that the admiral said was, “please properly work with Akebono.”

Since she knew it would be futile to object, she had to say she would do just that.

“She is a good ship.”

“She shelled the office though....”

“Thanks to her I get a chance to be comforted. I guess today I’ll go to Houshou-san..”

Since it seemed like the admiral was in a cheery mood, Kagerou remained silent and gave a bow before she then walked out. Right now, so that it would be okay in any time in case trouble happened, once again the home office was rebuilt in a prefabricated building. Thanks for today being the first day of post, there was nothing to do. To just lie down in her private room seemed like a good idea but on the contrary it seemed like her anger to Akebono would only pile up. On top of that, there are still time until dusk.

(Oh yes, didn’t they say there are other Fleet Girl in the Fourteen Destroyer Division....) Kagerou opened the document she received from the admiral.

“The first one is... Satsuki, huh.”

She had never met her in the first place but she had heard of her. If she wasn’t

mistaken within Mutsuki Class, she was exceptionally courageous.

“This kid seems sensible.”

Where is this seemingly sensible Fleet Girl? She could contact Personnel Department but she wanted to take the fastest way for this.

Finally Kagerou went into the Naval Base Office building. No matter what the naval base, it can be estimated that well-informed person would be there.

“Excuse me.”

Kagerou raised her voice as she opened the door wide and looked here and there. Just as she thought, she was nervous. With the people in Kure being so scary, just by walking in front of any Fleet Girl made her back sweat.

Until there was permission, she wouldn't step inside. While still standing by the corridor, she continued.

“I have something I would like to ask, would that be alright?”

“It's fine. Don't stay there, come in, come in.”

The young woman with drooping eyes who was inside, replied with a smile.

She was the Heavy Cruiser Atago. The second ship of Takao Class. Her vividly bright golden hair and imposing chest armor caught every eye, what's up with this girl? Even within heavy cruiser class that was rich in well endowed chests, hers were exceptional. Her pictures were widely distributed among the society.

“Thank you very much.”

While Kagerou said her gratitude, Atago tilted her head.

“Really, now. There are so many stiff Kure girls. Won't you talk to me as if I am your big sister more?”

“It's because I am the first ship of my class.”

She wanted to say that was because she obviously have no big sister, but Atago gave a bitter smile.

“I don't mean that way.”

“Atago-san is the secretary ship. I cannot be impolite.”

The young woman before her waved her hand.

“It’s okay, it’s okay. You see, according to the Admiral’s direction, for Fleet Girls to be friendly with one another is more important than anything else. All of us are sister, you know.”

Kagerou said, “I understand”, feeling the tension dissipated. It would also be easier for her and she felt thankful for that.

A secretary ship is, to explain it simply, the position as Admiral’s assistant. From assisting in construction and development to schedule adjustment and even healthcare, she assisted everything that happened. She was the Fleet Girl in the closest position to the Admiral.

There was nothing that she does not know. The Secretary ship girl of Kure was so composed she was scary, she could grasp the outcomes of everything one step ahead. If there were anyone who had the thought of spending ammunition wastefully, she would interrogate them until daybreak.

Secretary ship was a tad bit different with the other Fleet Girls, with them needing to have more than merely fighting ability. For example leadership, capability in negotiations, or capability in doing paperwork.

However it felt like Atago did not fit into any of the capabilities mentioned. If we talked about what would have fit her, it would have been things like “the one in charge of sex appeal”.

“Then, what business do you have, I wonder?”

Atago said with a light playful tone. Kagerou felt it’d be better if this kind of atmosphere not turning ugly.

“I would like to know where are the other girls of Fourteen Destroyer Division. For the time being, Satsuki.”

“Satsuki is that energetic girl, right. Rather than a little sister, she’s kind of like sibling.”

“I wonder where she might be.”

“I won’t tell you.”

“Pardon?”

Kagerou unintentionally replied. Atago puffed her cheeks.

“I’ve told you I want you to think of me as your Oneechan.”

“Indeed.”

“So if you don’t talk to me like you do to your Oneechan, I won’t tell you.”

“No, but...”

“I hate if you don’t call me Oneechan.”

With her hands balled into fists, Atago shook her body, making “I don’t like it! I don’t like it!” gesture [\[1\]](#). As she did so, her breasts moved like ship in vibration training. [\[2\]](#)

Kagerou had no time to marvel of the size of those. She was just at loss of words.

“.....”

“Say it, say it.”

“... ummm... I don’t... have a big sister...”

Atago ignored the protest and instead talked as if she had found a good idea.

“Let’s do it like this. After the question, add “Oneechan””

“Haa?!”

Kagerou couldn’t believe her ears. Is there an outbreak of bad disease in Yokosuka or something? [\[3\]](#) Perhaps the sea breeze from Pacific Ocean is bad.

“If you call me Oneechan, I will answer you.”

“But...”

“Come on, call me.”

Atago smiled brightly. However, contrary to her kind expression, there wasn’t to be any chance of her telling unless Kagerou call her.

Kagerou gave up. She took several deep breath. Then let it out from her mouth.

“Wo... would you kindly tell where is Satsuki.. O... Oneechan...”

“That won’t do. You should put in more emotions.”

Atago’s puffed cheek remained. Kagerou finally said in desperation.

“Please tell me where is Satsuki, Oneechan.”

“Nnnnnnn, CUTE!”

Suddenly she was hugged. Kagerou’s head was buried between Atago’s cleavage.

“MMPH—”

“Not only Kagerou class has great performance but also so cute. Finally you call me Oneechan, didn’t you?”

“Mmph! Mmmmph!”

“If it’s for such cute little sister, I will do anything!”

Atago took a pen then scribbled on a paper. She then gave it to Kagerou.

“Okay, here. I wrote every member down. Where’s the gratitude?”

“... Thank you very much.”

“Wrong, right?”

“Thanks, Oneechan.”

Atago beamed.

“You did well. Next time, maybe we should do picnic together!”

While mumbling, “I shan’t, Oneechan.”, Kagerou hurriedly left the room.

— —

According to the memo that Atago gave, Satsuki is in the dock.

“Is she hospitalized? I wonder if she got hurt.”

Kagerou walked fast towards the dock.

Within the many buildings in the surrounding, thanks to its small size, a beautiful new building came into view. It’s a facility for fleet girls’ exclusive use.

The official name was “Fleet Girl Exclusive Injuries and Sickness Recuperation Facility” however, the fleet girls call it dock. For those who received major

damage whilst fighting the Abyssal fleet and deemed as needing medical treatment, they would be sent to this facility. After all, the only ones that could battle the Abyssal fleet were only the girls. That was why cures were generously given.

After taking the visitor pass by the entrance and receiving explanation, she walked inside. She knocked on the door with “One” written on it.

Once she heard a reply saying, “Come in~”, she opened the door.

It was a really spacious private room. For lighting, the window was wide and there was several flower arrangements lined up. To prevent boredom, in addition to television and radio that were a certain, they even go as far as breeding tropical fish. By the wall was a landscape painting. It depicted a farm somewhere, seemingly intended to calm down tired hearts from the battlefield. However, according to the fleet girls Kagerou heard there were also a battlefield painting “Okinoshima waters” to maintain the desire to fight in the girls.

There was a bed by the center of the room. But no one was there.

“Eh...?”

It was empty. There was supposedly a reply but no one was here.

“Over here! Over here!”

A voice came from the opposite side of the room. Kagerou walked toward the other side of the bed.

A fleet girl was there. This girl must be Satsuki. It’s just that, it was just so hard to say anything.

The reason was because the girl was laying on push up position with only her tanktop.

“So sorry!”

Said Satsuki while still looking at the floor.

“I was just beginning my push up, you see. I couldn’t come out.”

“Ah, no... it’s alright but...”

“Why don’t you do it together?”

“ME!?”

“It feels good, you know. Let’s!”

Kagerou mumbled. In the naval base, both push up and running laps are famous. Fleet girls who did any mistake would be told to do it. For that reason, there exists no fleet girl who actually have a good impression on it.

However Satsuki alone was different. Kagerou tried to find a reason to object but since she was hurried on, she helplessly put both of her hands on the floor.

“Then, from the beginning. Oooone.”

With Satsuki’s voice, they moved their bodies.

“Twooooo.”

Uwaa, as I thought my body felt so heavy, thought Kagerou. If one missed on this hand training, the effect would wear off in a blink of an eye. When she became the fleet girl candidate and being worked hard to the bone in Edajima, she was made to do it so often it feels like everyday thing, but since it has been a while it seems like the creaking of her body had increased.

“Teeeeen. Well then, for what business do you come here?”

“Aaaa... I’m Kagerou. I have been assign to Fourteen Destroyer Division.”

“Fifteen. Aa, so you’re the fleet girl in charge as leader. I’m Satsuki. Yoroshiku.”

“Yoroshiku... Hey, hey, Satsuki. So in Yokosuka dock, it is required to do basic stamina drill?”

“Nope. It’s not like that.”

Tweeenty. As she said something along that line, Satsuki talked.

“It’s my hobby. During sortie I injured myself, but in the dock there was nothing to do so I do it like this.”

“Is is even necessary for an injured person to do push up? For destroyer’s injury, isn’t just by being in the dock for a while you can go out again right away?”

“Thiiiiirty. Because for us, strength is our capital asset, isn’t it? We shouldn’t

purposely skipping it.”

“Just because, you said. But for me... to be told to do it as well...”

“Foourty. You’re not the only one. Everyone who came visiting did it too. But you see, everyone stopped in the middle of the way. Suddenly the kids who come visiting gone and I got assigned to Fourteen Destroyer Division.”

Satsuki gave an “ahahaha” laugh.

I see now, I understand, thought Kagerou whose two arms began to gradually trembled. *This girl, are testing the other girls like this. She wanted to see if they could pass her or not, challenging their real strength. Of course those many girls would shout “Don’t make fun of me!” and get away from her. Well of course, coming to visit and instead get forced to do push up, anyone will get mad.*

This girl, along with Akebono, are also leftovers, lamented Kagerou in her heart.

There, Satsuki raised her voice.

“Fourty niiiine. Fourty eeeeeeight.”

“Wait! Why is this in group training count system?! Usually we stop by fifty, isn’t it.”

“Eeehh? You’re tired already?”

Satsuki said with a calm expression.

“I thought those from Kure could do a bit more than this~”

“Ku....”

Kagerou gritted her teeth together. With that, a fire lit up.

“I’ll go along with you no matter how many it is!”

Now you’ve done it. Just like what Akebono said, Kagerou Class took pride in their physical strength. At Edojima, while their comrades were collapsing and falling, she and Shiranui together were the only one doing push up endlessly. When their cruising distance was so long that their comrades collapse, the limit between them are just different. *If it’s a challenge, the only answer is accept!*

“Thirty niiiine. Ooo, Kagerou, you pull it off~”

“Thirty eeeeeight! Come on, let the count come!”

“Thirty seveeeen. We can’t have it another way.”

From the numbers nearing fifty it got even lower and lower, but when she thought it would soon reach zero, the numbers just increased again. It was a seemingly never ending competition of willpower.

As their sweat accumulated akin to river, finally Satsuki stopped her count.

“Fiiiiiifty. Aaaaah, so tired, so tired.”

Although she said fifty, in reality it was nearing two hundred. Satsuki stood up, taking the two towels prepared on top of the bed.

“You can use this.”

“Thanks.”

Making a composed expression, Kagerou took it. In truth, her feet were weak and her hands were trembling, however she supported the obstinacy against what seem to be white flag raising.

“Kagerou really pulled it off huh. There is no other fleet girl who is able to stick with me until this far.”

Satsuki said like she was relieved. Kagerou wiped her sweat.

“Heee. So YokoBase girls are quite weak in physical strength huh.”

“Ahahaha. There you said it. Well then, did you come to call me? That I am okay to go out of the dock?”

“Just like that. There is the permission from Atago-san.”

At the same time when Kagerou as told the the locations, she also gained the leave permission.

Satsuki shouted, “Yes!”

“So Atago-san said it’s alright!”

“You better thank me. I put myself on the line.”

“Don’t tell me, you called her Oneechan?”

“Yeah I did.”

Satsuki seemed to be surprised, before then she let out a laugh while clutching her stomach.

“Even though everyone is refusing and running away! You’re amazing!”

“Ee?! I I thought the others called her that way too....”

“It’s just Kagerou.”

I’ve been deceived, Kagerou lamented. It’s no wonder that Atago was so happy and elated “W-Well, let’s forget that. Next, you have to do according to my direction okay.”

“Yep. Sure.”

Unexpectedly, Satsuki answered easily.

“Since you keep up with me in the push up until the end. I will follow Kagerou.”

“Then it’s good.”

Kagerou rolled up the towel.

“This, after I wash it I’ll return it.”

“I give it to you. Since tomorrow I will be leaving the hospital, let’s do push up together again.”

As expected, Kagerou answered, “Not for the second time, sorry.”

Kagerou sat down outside the dock. Around the time she was leaving, she saw Satsuki was preparing for an abdominal muscle workout. What dry dock patient, are you really even injured?

She took a second to take a deep breath, and then stood up. Well then, next. She needed to go meet her comrades, whose whereabouts were not even certain.

“The next one is. Arare, I see..... Arare?”

For a second she thought she misread it but there was no mistaking Atago’s beautiful writing. Surely, it says Arare.

It was written that she was always by the study room, so Kagerou went to look.

The study room was located besides the destroyer dormitory. What is meant by destroyer dormitory is that its the boarding house where destroyers sleep. Of course, that place was exclusively used by destroyers. One by one the desks were assigned to respective girls, it was made so that they can study or search for materials.

There are many desks by the destroyer training room. It was because the number of destroyers are high. In Carrier Dormitory or Battleship dormitory, with the same amount of space the number of desks are fewer and because of that they can use it with ease. In the past there was a voice to go protesting, "It's tyranny!" but right at that moment it was brought down when they were told, "if it exceeds the ship capacity, we will expand the study room."

Upon entering the study room, Kagerou headed towards the deeper end of the room, slipping through scattered equipment. Since there are instances of fleet girls constantly needing to refer back to the manual in order to look for information about their borrowed equipment, here and there gun turrets and torpedo firing tubes were prepared. Inside, things like a Type 90 Torpedo with an unloaded warhead or even default ship turbines scattered about.

She skillfully slipped past them. This can still be considered a decent condition. In Kure, there were hammocks hanging like silkworm shelves around where gun barrels were placed.

"A, there she is!"

She approached the girl she was looking for.

Arare was facing the desk. Even among destroyers where girls with small statures are common, she was especially small, her body was also slender. Because it was inside a room, her destroyer garrison cap was taken off, and it was easy to spot her with her lightly wavy hair.

She hadn't changed from that time.

Kagerou turned happy, then called her.

"Arare, hey, Arare!"

Arare turned around. A childish, but composed facial features.

“Hasn’t it been a while?!”

Arare stared at Kagerou. For a while she was silent.

“.... who...?”

Kagerou was almost overturned.

“It’s me! Me! Kagerou! In Kure weren’t we in the same Sixth Destroyer Division!?”

“Aa...”

Arare made a movement indicating that she didn’t quite remember.

“... now that you mention it...”

“You remembered?”

“Maybe...”

Arare muttered something worrying.

Kagerou was in the same fleet as Arare in Kure. The others were Shiranui and Kasumi. Being the so-called comrades who eat from the same trencher, their relationship was something Kagerou was proud of.

Arare had her assignment changed before Kagerou. It’s just that Kageru didn’t hear where. In any case Arare was a silent girl, so she didn’t inform where she was going to be transferred. This trait was what makes Kagerou had time she suspected that the anmitsu she was treated to eat a lot was a change for silence.

Regardless, being able to see a nostalgic face made Kagerou feel relieved.

“Arare, you also became part of the Fourteenth Destroyer Division, right.”

“Yes...”

“You know, I am so happy I met an old friend.”

“... Me too... well...”

Even though the words somewhat placed some distance between them, Kagerou didn’t care.

“Can I hug you?”

“Well, that is a bit....”

“Don’t say that.”

Gyuuu. She forcefully hugged. Although she thought, am I becoming kind of like Atago-san? the deep emotions of a long time reunion continued in her.

Arare remain silent and complied. From the very beginning she wasn’t a girl who pushed her self assertion to someone else.

“Hey, Arare, I had been feeling so nervous wondering if I am all alone in Yokosuka. Among the people, I met the girl who call herself “boku” and start doing push up, then I faced this bad mannered fleet girl.”

“That’s Akebono...”

That cynical person seems to be very famous.

“But with Arare here, I am happy. Why are you in Fourteenth Destroyer Division?”

“There was a fleet assignment... when somewhat I remained silent... I was told to go to Fourteenth Destroyer Division...”

“You’re quite taciturn, aren’t you. But I am here too so it’s alright.”

“What is it that’s alright?”

Along with the voice, suddenly her neck was caught then being pulled back.

Upon turning around, a lone fleet girl was there. A girl with eyebrows that looked as if they slanted upward, along with soft smooth hair. Her facial expression and tone seemed to harbor strong will; rather than a fleet girl it was easier to feel her presence as that of feudal samurai warrior or a knight.

Seeing her black-dominated sailor uniform, Kagerou knew right away. Isn’t this girl from Mutsuki Class?

“.... You’re Nagatsuki, aren’t you. As I thought, you’re part of the Fourteenth Destroyer Division.”

“I am. So you’re Kagerou.”

Nagatsuki said while giving an unfriendly gaze.

“When I thought of going inside the study room, I saw you hugging a submissive Arare. Are you a newbie molester or something?”

“I’m not! I’m just warming up to a friend!”

“It’s unnecessary to do that, isn’t it.”

Being extremely outspoken, Nagatsuki slipped into the space between Arare and Kagerou.

“This is Yokosuka. Not Kure.”

“Now I am also a part of Yokosuka.”

“If so, then there are other destroyers. You’d better go to them.”

“I was given orders by the Admiral, I can’t help it now, can I?”

“That person will listen to anything as long as Houshou-san or Ikazuchi gives a pat on the head. Go bribe the two of them.”

“Why does it have to go that far?!”

Involuntarily Kagerou raised her voice. Giving a cold gaze, Nagatsuki continued with a bit of emotion.

“From the start, it was only Arare and I in the Fourteenth Destroyer Division. Just when we were talking about the two of us making it the strongest fleet, right then, people like you and Satsuki were moved in, even Akebono was assigned in. Wouldn’t that dampered the long awaited spirit? That is why, go away.”

Somehow, Kagerou understood.

In other words, Nagatsuki felt Kagerou’s existence as a hindrance. Right at the time when they thought about doing a lot of things together, outsiders who she should watch out for came butting in. Perhaps it would be appropriate to describe it like a kid who goes inside the sandbox just to trample on it.

That is something pitiful, but this side cannot pull back either.

Kagerou deliberately cleaned her throat.

“Because I’m the lead ship, you should obey me.”

“What did you say?”

Nagatsuki’s reaction was unexpected. It seemed she had not heard of it.

“Why does a destroyer become the lead ship of other destroyers!”

“Ask the Admiral. In any case, this time, I am the most esteemed ship in Fourteenth Destroyer Division. I won’t forgive disobedience.”

As expected, even she herself felt that was a bit over the top. However, she could not think of any other statement. Overconfident assertion, for Kagerou, is personally an unfavorable conduct, but there is no space for careful persuasion. Even if the worst would happen, since this is the hierarchy of organizational order, she of course would not disobey the words of the superior, would she.

However, Nagatsuki opposed.

“I refuse.”

She said it while moving as if she would protect Arare.

“I will not acknowledge you as lead ship. The Fourteenth Destroyer Division is a fleet of Arare and I alone. Leave us alone.”

“You’ve been saying nonsense this whole time. Aren’t you from SaBase? (Sasebo Base) Being a Mutsuki class, instead of Arare, aren’t you supposed to be hanging out with Satsuki?”

“I don’t need that muscle training maniac. I’ve decided to be with Arare.”

Nagatsuki gave a stare that said she would not hear anyone else’s opinion. Akebono was rebellious, but this girl, she was stubborn. Kagerou also realized this later on, but it seemed that it was because this girl’s personality was so reactive, that she was moved to the Fourteenth Destroyer Division.

“I have no business with you.”

“Well, I do.”

“If I say none, then there is none. Arare, let’s go.”

Nagatsuki pulled Arare. Arare who looked like she was daydreaming, followed just like that.

There was no time to shout “wait”. The both of them have gone somewhere

else, and Kagerou was left just like that, dumbfounded.

Her mouth mouthed a “He”. What the heck, why is it only these kind of girls? Does the Admiral having some kind of grudge against me or something? Saying please do something for the leftovers, because it isn’t a troop made out of scrapped stragglers.

To say it honestly, I think it’s almost similar to that already. With Arare -who’s always silent-as the only decent one, it’s a set of a cynical girl, a muscle-training maniac, and an obstinate girl. I bet I, too, am in that category somehow.

She mourned about it alone. Thinking of looking for the last person, Kagerou walked out of the study room.

The last member of the Fourteenth Destroyer Division was Ushio.

She was thinking that she would get fed up with having to laboriously search for another troublesome person, but that did not happen. That person herself came to her.

That fleet girl came rushing towards Kagerou, who was just going out to go to the port. She swiftly bowed.

“E-excuse me, are you Kagerou-san? Kagerou of the Kagerou class.”

“Yes, that’s me.”

“I’m Ushio.”

Kagerou said “Aaa~”, feeling anticlimactic as just like that all of her objectives were achieved.

Ushio seemed demure and her appearance did not look tough. Judging by her attitude, it looked as if she was right about to burst out crying.

Kagerou thought, another somewhat extreme personality, I see. Many destroyer are like, either they have a small size and on the contrary, a big attitude, or those that once they shut up, they will remain silent until the end of the century. Called “Destroyer” in English, it was said that perhaps, in order to make the big ships go “eat this!” and target them whenever they meet, that the destroyers all have eccentric personalities. This is the case in the place beyond the ocean, but she heard that because same sized ships were so many, they all

deliberately act like weirdos.

The fleet girl right before her eyes, how to say it, felt so timid to the point she didn't look like a destroyer.

For the sake of formalities, Kagerou said,

"So you're also in the Fourteenth Destroyer Division, right?"

"Yes. Umm... I will be in your care."

In reflex, Kagerou replied, "Now, now, I will be in your care as well." while bowing her head. She was an extremely polite fleet girl.

Ushio bowed her head down. Just by that, her breasts shook.

Kagerou heartily muttered.

"Despite being a destroyer...."

"What is it.....?"

"Nothing. Well then, with this, everyone is complete...."

"Umm, may I ask where Akebono-chan is?"

"Who knows. Maybe she's somewhere over there?"

"I've been looking for her the whole time, but I couldn't find her..."

Kagerou answered half-heartedly.

"Maybe she's around places like the naval base office building's rooftop."

"It seems like she was quarreling with another destroyer there. I've told her stop picking fights with everyone she sees..."

That must have been me, thought Kagerou. So, it wasn't solely to newcomers, but she picks fights with everyone equally.

"It's okay now. Because I've met her."

"But its about Akebono-chan, who has finally being assigned to a fleet. All these times no matter where it was, she was always being left behind... a, there she is, there she is!"

Far far away, near the sport ground used for training, was Akebono.

Ushio called, “Akebono-chan!”. Akebono glanced towards them, then ignored everything and continued walking. Right at that time, Ushio rushed over, saying something.

It seemed to have been something along the lines of “be good friends with everyone okay”. Akebono seemed like she was stubbornly unaccepting, with her actions of rejecting everything that Ushio said. She may have been pouring profanity, since she even flailed her hands around.

Even from afar, it was easy to see Ushio was feeling dejected. Unable to bear it, Kagerou voluntarily walked closer.

“Wait a moment, Akebono.”

Akebono glanced and met eyes with Kagerou.

“So you come again? How meddlesome.”

Her usual bad mouth. Her rough short breathing must be because they had quarrel before. Her whole body exuded a [don’t approach, don’t touch, and don’t get close] aura.

In contrast, Ushio had tear filled eyes. For no surprise, Kagerou was angered, she put her hands on her waist.

“You, treat your friend more kindly, will you?”

“Friend? Is this by chance about Ushio?”

“Of course. She had especially been looking for you!”

Akebono let out a laugh.

“Don’t be stupid. I don’t even ask for it. What a chore.”

“You listen here, what’s up with saying she’s not a friend while she has been frantically looking for you!”

“Trying to make me who is fine alone belong to a fleet, is nothing more other than meddling in someone else’s business.”

She just said she wouldn’t listen. Kagerou got increasingly furious.

“It’s because of wanting to know about everyone!”

“There are girls who are just like Shimakaze running around alone, okay.”

“That’s because she has that extreme speed that she can do nothing else, though!”

Shikamaze has no ship of the same class so it was hard to affiliate her with the other destroyers. That was why she has special treatment.

Akebono is of the Ayanami Class. Since it is the next class after Fubuki Class, there are other ships within that same class.

“Because they held on together is why destroyers have battle power. If we go astray, let alone scouting for main force, we can’t even escort!”

Suddenly, as if she had been hurt, Akebono shouted,

“Escort?! Don’t be stupid! That’s the job of a miserable stupid destroyer! I refuse such thing!”

“Haa? It’s an important duty, you know.”

“This simpleton! Doing it like that, getting flattered then letting yourself be used and destroyed, that’s why the destroyers are being looked down upon!”

Kagerou was bewildered. Escorting is a destroyer’s important duty. From big vessels to fleets, whatever is in need of protecting, they protect it. Things like shooting down flying enemy aircraft, driving away submarines, rescuing victims are the things they do.

She held those duties as something to be proud of. Her former flagship, Jintsuu, also taught her by saying repeatedly, “escorting is something that can only be done by destroyers. It’s an important duty.” It’s worth bragging that thanks to them, the large ships can utilize their power.

However, what’s up with that remark.

“..... who’s exactly the one who makes the destroyers be looked down upon now!”

Kagerou finally lost her temper.



“It’s because bad mannered girls like you that destroyers’ image is falling! Me who get pushed in like this, is what, a scrap vendor?”

“That kind of manner is unpleasant. You’re the first of the Kagerou Class, right. Just like Ant lion, disappearing in an instant is the joke.” [\[4\]](#)

“It’s because you keep on saying cynical things like that that you are being hated!”

“I know enough that I’m being hated. Leave me be!”

“Even I want to leave you be, but we’re fellow destroyers! Aren’t we comrades!”

“If you have no need of me, why don’t you drop me out?! If you say that to Atago-san I bet she’d do that for you.”

“Yeeesss, I’m going to do just that, you shitty idiot! I’ll empty your equipment, throw it over the port, and make you a target ship in Wakasaoki!”

“Quick and be done with it, kay? Else, in place of smacking you with a ship oar, I’ll rain torpedoes on you!”

After dropping an “IDIOOOOOOT!” remark, Akebono turned her back around and ran away.

Kagerou didn’t stop her. Fury still coiled around inside her stomach.

“Excuse me...”

Timidly Ushio called her.

“What”

When she glared back, Ushio was shocked.

“A.... I’m sorry...”

Looking at her expression, regret sank in right away.

“Ah no... I also apologize. It wasn’t even your fault.”

Kagerou pushed away her anger, forcing herself to give a smile. She would sooner have nothing but anger welling up for Akebono, but to lash it on Ushio was unmistakably wrong.

Ushio still seemed to be unsure of Kagerou’s feelings.

“I am sorry... I apologize in place of Akebono-chan.”

Since she really bowed down, Kagerou quickly stopped her.

“It’s okay, it’s okay. It’s all Akebono’s fault.”

Ushio looked at Kagerou from under her brows.

“Excuse me... About Akebono-chan, will you really drop her out....?”

“I wonder~”

Perhaps because she had seen the troubling situation, Ushio’s eyes welled up in tears. Panicking, Kagerou denied it.

“I won’t, I wont. Since she’s still a part of the Fourteenth Destroyer Division. If I drop her out just because I did what was told to, it’ll look as if I’m the one who lost and isn’t that frustrating? We will be together.”

Ushio brushed her chest.

“Thank you very much. I am relieved....”

“I should also polish my bad mouthing, don’t you think.”

It was meant to be a joke, but Ushio seemed to take it seriously.

“Please don’t be so affected by Akebono-chan. All the others destroyers until now, everyone ended up having strained relations with her. I think it will be much better to just look after her.”

“Ushio, you’re kind, aren’t you.”

“Thank you...”

“But you’ll only be used, why don’t you just cut your ties with Akebono?”

Ushio shook her head.

“I can’t do that. I have finally been included in the destroyers that Akebono-chan has accepted. I will stick with her to the end. With this as a trigger, I hope I can bring back the amenable girl she used to be.”

“Amenable? Akebono?”

She thought that it must have been a joke but Ushio was dead serious.

“Yes. I don’t know any destroyer as genuinely devoted to her duty as her.”

“No waaaaaay.”

Involuntarily Kagerou cackled a laughter. Ushio gave a serious look.

“It’s true. The shelling of the main office, it was because the admiral asked her to. The admiral said, be careful not to damage anything else, just destroy the main office. With that, the admiral can go to Houshou-san and battleship-san to be spoiled.”

“Aa....”

Kagerou remembered the admiral’s “For today I guess I will go to Hoshou-san~” statement.

That aside, to be able to only shell the main office without involving anything else, actually is a note-worthy ability. Even Kagerou who felt the after blow, was unscathed.

“Mmmmm.... Devoted, huh.....”

“I understand what Kagerou-san would want to say. However, I am also partly responsible in Akebono-chan becoming like that. That’s why, I beg you to forgive her.”

“Is that so?”

Kagerou unconsciously asked back. However Ushio repeatedly bowed down,

saying only, “Please, I beg of you to take care of Akebono-chan.”

Translator’s Notes and References

1. [↑](#) She’s throwing a tantrum. Just Imagine this <http://i.imgur.com/GTq65.gif>
2. [↑](#) It’s probably not what you guys are thinking about. It means the vibration of the ship’s hull due to the engine or so it seems... I can’t really put my finger on the meaning
3. [↑](#) Basically she’s calling them nuts
4. [↑](#) A pun. “Usubakagerou” literally means ant lion, but usubaka means idiot. Akebono was discreetly saying Idiot-gerou.

Chapter 3(Fire)

Fire

The next morning.

Before the wake-up horn sounded, Akebono crawled out of her sleeping quarter.

As explained before, all destroyers were admitted into the destroyer dormitory. One room would consist of two or three persons. Each has her own bed and locker. This would only be a repetition, but in the case of Battleships and Carriers, on top of getting a private room, they got a big quarters with two rooms, which at times were becoming a subject of envy.

Usually, a destroyer division consisted of four destroyers but the Fourteenth Destroyer Division had six. That was why they used up to three rooms. Like submarines, in a small room there were bunk beds, and assuring privacy is only in the form of blind curtain. Feeling of dislike, even if only by hearing, makes the advantage of raising the friendship between the fleet girls unable to happen.

Kagerou was in the same room as Satsuki. Since she has a bright disposition, Kagerou thought that it wouldn't be boring but the curtain was continuously closed. There would be no light there, she felt like there was no need to go that far. It was on the level that the curtain would not be opened even if Kagerou went inside the room for the first time and mumbled, *okay let's sleep*. At times sounds were heard, it seems like she was doing push-ups.

Kagerou wondered if she did not want to be in touch with anyone. However it seemed it wasn't only in that room, it seemed the same for Fourteenth Destroyer Division anywhere.

(Something is amiss...)

At Kure, bonds were a lot stronger. Destroyers would go "what's wrong?" "It's like this". When she was arranging her own clothes, she would also check on Shiranui's. Of course, Shiranui would also check hers, there wasn't any kind of dangerous relationship.

This “feeling of something amiss” continued even until their first training.

Fourteenth Destroyer Division was gathered by the naval base’s pier. Suddenly Kagerou was told by Takao: “You do it.”

Right at the time when Kagerou said, “I beg of your guidance.”, that was the answer that she got.

There was no discretion for Kagerou who blurted, “eh?”. Usually a light cruiser or a heavy cruiser would direct from above. Light cruisers, especially, would easily handle the enemy dummy during the torpedo attack training.

“Why am I the one to do it?”

“You’re the leader, aren’t you.”

“I’m a destroyer, you know?!”

“No such thing as you can’t.”

“It’s not that, I have never done it!”

“It’s first time for everyone who begins.”

Takao, who said the remark, then left while saying, “I have training with Choukai.”

Kagerou was left dumbfounded. She was expecting that perhaps Takao would come back but her figure disappeared. To make it worse, not a single person passed by.

Helplessly, she turned around. There, each member of Fourteenth Destroyer Division stood in rows.

Saying that they stood in rows was just mentioning the good things. Essentially, they did lined up in a row but just like cars parking illegally, they were uneven. Nagatsuki was glowering at Kagerou like she have found an archenemy while Arare beside her, had her eyes roamed about aimlessly. Satsuki repeatedly said, “Let’s do muscle training! Muscle training!”, Ushio meekly paid attention only to the one on her right side. There, Akebono bluntly looked away.

It has been decided for Kagerou to lead the training of these girls.

However.

(With them as my members, what the heck should I do!)

She did not say her lamentation out loud but inside her heart she was screaming. She was a destroyer, not a light cruiser or heavy cruiser. She had never heard of a destroyer leading a training. Suddenly merely wanting to train turned into a mountain-like obstacle. She had no confidence to be the leader.

Several destroyers passed them by. “There’s Akebono” “And Satsuki too” “Only leftovers...” sayings could be heard.

It was the worst feeling. *Ah Kami-sama, if you’re there please hear me. I won’t even ask for the luxury to be reincarnated as a Carrier. Be it submarine chasers, or fishing boats, or special observation boat, I will become anything. I beg of you, just please don’t shove the burden on me. A, as expected, disguise heavy cruiser is best. It’s kind of cool.*

Praying to the heaven, she blinked two or three times. With that, she somehow managed to drive out her grief.

“Well then, let’s do cruising training.”

“What did you say?”

Nagatsuki’s question was mixed with hostility.

“Cruising at this point? What are we, kids who can’t even swim?”

“Cruising is the foundation of everything. We’re advancing on water surface, we’re ships. Well then, let’s do this.”

Kagerou clapped vigorously.

However she felt that what Nagatsuki had said was right. The very first step of the first stage, at the time when they became Kanmusu, it was repeated over and over to the point that they grew tired of it. Although it didn’t reach the feeling that it’s okay to not do it, but she could not wipe the feeling of “at this late?”.

It’s just that Kagerou didn’t know how else to do the training. That was why she would do the navigation she herself understand, and to stimulate herself and get rid of nervousness, she clapped her hands.

Together, they went to take their equipments.

Fundamentally, fleet girls wore their equipment for the majority of the day. They, of course wear it during training, but they also do not take them off during breaks. They only take them off during meal, bath, and sleep; during which they leave it to the hand of maintenance crew. There were also girls who thought that since their lives depended on it, then they should be the one who take care of it. To those kind of Fleet Girls, the equipments were lend.

Receiving permission from the Military Unit Equipment Storage, they took their armaments.

Kagerou was relieved when she saw equipments which [Kure -> Yokosuka] written on it. If it was gone, it would be quite a thing.

Since they were destroyers, their armaments were all guns and torpedoes. The second main equipment, is communication device, which forgetting it would be out of the question.

Kagerou's gun armament was a 12.7 cm twin gun. However, only Satsuki and Nagatsuki have a 12 cm single gun. Even though to battle the Abyssal Fleet, upgrading equipment was an urgency, where there had been barely any change reaching the Destroyers. Only the torpedo firing tubes that were spreading among every destroyer. This seemed to be strongly intended by the admiral.

Depending on each type of destroyers, their armaments differed. Specifically, there were differences in the shape of the clasp, the armament parts changed. The purpose was to make them compatible with the fleet girls, thus the armaments were distributed based on the result of the aptitude test.

This aptitude test was quite the villain, as no matter if the said person said she wished to become battleship or aircraft carrier, the result of the aptitude test would be prioritized in determining everything. Exceptionally beautiful girls [\[1\]](#) got their body size measured, their blood and urine taken, the hole and nook and crannies examined, and finally connected to numerous cords they had, their heads were covered with a headgear seemed to only have been seen by new species of life form, having a mysterious CG projected to their retina where they will answer "yes" or "no" for various questions like above or below, red or blue, and "would you try to kill this person?".

They did get informed about the result but the mechanism would never go to

light. Once, there was a fleet girl who filed a misleading information lawsuit, doubting that [did they make the examination ticket into a paper plane and decided on the one that flew the farthest], however as it being treated as a high class secret, the call was refused.

Kagerou had no regret getting chosen as a destroyer. However, there were times where she doubted whether or not the personality examination was functional. Especially when she met girls like Akebono.

Even now, inside the storage house, Akebono remained turning her back away and didn't make a move.

"Hey, put on your equipment."

She ignored Kagerou's warning.

"Akebono, it won't be a training if not all member on a cruise."

"It's pointless."

Akebono glared at Kagerou.

"At any rate, everyone is freaking bad that they can't even do formation or move in fleet, so it's useless doing it."

"It's not useless! It's basic, of course everyone can do it!"

"How nice being a Kure-born. You seriously think that every fleet girl can properly sail?"

"Of course."

"Then it's better to try it out yourself."

After she said it herself, Akebono put on her armaments.

They returned to the pier. Save from the time when they just became fleet girls, they didn't use the pool for cruising training. They would be battling on the sea so of course they would train by the sea.

Kagerou took the initiative and placed her foot on the sea surface from the pier. She was somewhat thrown off balance but right away, regained her stability. The surrounding sensation did not differ with when she was in Kure.

The ones that supported the fleet girls on the sea were the apparatus by both

of their feet. From every angle they were shoes and the feeling of wearing them did not differ with actual shoes, however the fleet girls called them “main machine”. By the back and the heel part of main machine, propulsion power was generated, and they could move forward.

In a way, the main machine was a very important equipment, even more than the armament. This apparatus along with the unit the fleet girls carrying on their backs (called the boiler), were the two that gave the fleet girls propulsion, in which without them the fleet girls would not be able to move. If their boilers were destroyed, the fleet girl would only halt to a standstill, but if their main machines were destroyed they would lose their ability to float and would sink.

Kagerou felt a bit of relief, then said to Akebono.

“See? We can do it can we?”

“For now.”

Akebono answered as if she ridiculed Kagerou.

Since they somewhat progressing, Kagerou ordered them to form a line.

“Well then... we shall begin from line ahead.”

It’s a technique of cruising in one single vertical formation. It’s the most basic formation, said to be easy. Since just by paying attention to the fleet girl in front, it could somehow work out, it was also meant for newly assigned fleet girls.

The leadership Kagerou became the head of the line. She looked back numerous times, making sure that they were making a line.

“Here we go~. Both sides advance forward in regular speed.”

Kagerou began to advance. When she looked back, everyone was following after her.

She was relieved. *Hey, look. There is no problem in any way.*

“Both sides standard speed ahead, Black 10.” [\[2\]](#)

She adjusted the speed, increasing only the rotation of the main machine. At the same time as when she said the words, she didn’t forget to send signals from her back.

She looked back once more. A feeling that somewhat they got separated.

That's strange. Wondering if she was too fast, she gave a different order.

"Both side standard speed ahead. Red 15."

Thud! An impact happened, something hit her back. Kagerou almost fell forward.

When she looked back, Satsuki was brushing her head.

"Ouch..."

"Hey, didn't I say to drop the speed? How could you just run into me?"

"Eeee, but it was standard speed."

"Not that speed, I did gave a red signal, didn't I? I said decrease the rotation."

"Red?"

Satsuki cocked her head to one side. For one moment, Kagerou felt dizzy.

"Black is rotation up, red is down! You learn things like these right away, didn't you!"

"Aa, I don't like classroom lecture."

Somehow Satsuki seemed proud.

"It's better to just do muscle training and increase your physical power. On top of it, I get hurt a lot in expedition and were always in the dock so I don't go to lectures often."

She laughed. Kagerou was on her wit's end.

"You don't know about the basics at all?! How could you went to an expedition without knowing them."

"But it'll be alright as long as we go, go home, and return."

"Where the heck did you get hurt?"

"I always go full throttle on both sides, so my main machine got broken and I got injured by the waves."

Satsuki said lightly.

This muscle training idiot, thought Kagerou. If one always were to go full speed, it was obvious that one could easily get hurt. Kagerou turned to curse herself that she used to think that the dock was remotely for those injured from fighting the Abyssal.

“Is there even a fleet girl unable to even form a fleet formation...”

“I am not the only one, you know?”

Satsuki turned back. There, the other fleet girls cruised while being in a disarray.

“Kyaaa, Arare-san, please go further ahead a bit more!”

“Ignore that, Arare. I will protect you.”

“...”

The three fleet girls grouped together and went this way. Rather than a line, it was more of a yarn. Ushio was in confusion and kept waving her hands around, while Nagatsuki had her hand firmly gripped on Arare’s arm, not letting it go. Arare had her mouth joined tightly that it seemed like she was not even conscious.

The girls remained in a chaos just like that, even now it seemed like they would capsize.

From a place separated from that scene, Akebono was watching with cold stare.

“See, look at that.”

In any case, Kagerou rebutted.

“It-It must be just because they are inexperienced!”

“To be inexperienced in something basic, isn’t that the worst?”

“Badly forgetting things happens all the time. I’m sure if we get into battle formation they can properly do it.”

“Hmph. Then why don’t you try it.”

A verbal expression akin to a muffled laughter. Kagerou rode on the provocation.

“Every member, on one horizontal line! Think of when you battle the Abyssal fleet!”

During battle, the fleet girls time and time again formed a horizontal line and attacked.

Then from there it was the most difficult part. They had to synchronize with fellow fleet girls on the back and on the front, also by their left and right, and they had to do it mid-battle. If per chance only one person got to the front or got separated, the timing for torpedo firing would be ruined. For guns, by the time they shot they could do split-second adjustment, however for torpedoes once you launched them it was over so they could not do the same.

“Properly match the gap on your side!”

Kagerou gave her direction. This gap is also important, if they were so bad and went too far away they would not be able to hear the direction, too close will make their head bump to each other.

“Both sides first battle speed ahead!”

Along with Kagerou’s voice, they have moved forward simultaneously.

However, they got scattered right away. Ushio was separated, Satsuki got ahead of Kagerou.

“Bo, Both sides second battle speed ahead!”

When the propulsion increased, the line got terribly disordered. Even the interval between them and the direction were caught in disarray.

“Oh, come on! Properly form a line!”

She did not know whether her voice reached them or not. Satsuki said things like “Iyeeeei!” while running swiftly, Nagatsuki was snuggling Arare as usual. Akebono continued to advance drowsily.

Arare had her right hand grabbed by Nagatsuki. Thanks to that, Arare was gradually going clockwise, cutting through Ushio’s cruising route.

Ushio being a totally bad in cruising, only paid attention to her own feet. Because of it, she didn’t notice Arare and Nagatsuki.

“.....A, kyaaaaaaaaa!”

THUMP. Ushio slammed into Nagatsuki. The reason why it wasn't Arare was because Nagatsuki took the blow instead.

Both of them toppled over the sea surface. Kagerou rushed back in hurry.

“Hey! Are you okay?”

Nagatsuki became the first one to stand up and instead of to Kagerou, she talked to Arare.

“Are you hurt, Arare? I shielded you.”

“.... Thank you.”

Nagatsuki was relieved, taking Arare's hand. She said things like “that's great”, she even looked like she had tears in her eyes.

There was no time for Kagerou to watch their drama exchange.

“More importantly, what about Ushio?!”

That same Ushio turned to face up by the water surface, eyes rolling.

“Funyaaa...”

“Now, I got you up okay.”

Kagerou had caught her hand and pulled her up. She was conscious, but she seemed dizzy. It was a collision on second battle speed. Having her only hurt this much was good luck.

“Are you hurt anywhere?”

“No...”

Ushio shook her head numerous time, trying to keep conscious. Kagerou was relieved.

“Hhhh... how good that you're lucky...”

“I have always been like this, I have never been hurt... It maybe strange if I said it myself but, I think this is good luck.”

“Isn't that good that you're lucky.”

As a fleet girl, it was a really important ability to survive, so many raised their luck. At times the fleet girls themselves claimed so. Just like how there were fleet girls who sank just by one hit, there were also fleet girls who managed to swallow numerous hit gracefully and could still get to the naval base by themselves. However, if that continued numerous times, then the title [the reason why she survive is because she's lucky] would be gone.

“Thanks to you being lucky, we got caught up in trouble though.”

The one who said that was not Kagerou. Suddenly, there was Akebono, who came around.

“Bumping on others, do you still want to trouble others? Why don't you shape up already?”

“...”

“If there was a fleet girl on your cruising route, isn't it common sense to go back astern?”

“...”

Without returning anything, Ushio hung her head down in shame and was dejected.

Since she looked utterly disheartened, Kagerou couldn't stop her mouth from interfering.

“Everyone must have done a miss or two in their life.”

“Can you say that if a big trouble like what happened between Inazuma and Miyuki occur?”

“Ugh....”

As expected it was hard to return on that. Misses that happened on the surface of the sea could easily take life. Especially if they were in the middle of battling Abyssal Fleet, if it happened there, maybe no recovery could have occurred.

Even so, right then, Kagerou rebutted.

“Then, can you do fleet synchronized maneuver easily?”

“Of course I can.”

Akebono answered smoothly. Kagerou was angered.

“Then why don’t we go and see it.”

“Fine. You and me alone do it.”

One bad word asks another. It has been decided that they would do fleet synchronized maneuver with just the two of them. The others would rest and be the viewer.

Akebono took her position by Kagerou’s right side. She said, “You can begin anytime.”

“Both side full speed ahead.”

Kagerou moved the main machine. Instead of standard speed, it suddenly amped to high speed. When she glanced to her right, Akebono was following with a calm expression.

“Both sides full battle speed ahead.”

Kagerou class took pride in their ship speed. As long as the other ship was not Shimakaze, she had the confidence that she could outrun them leisurely. Akebono expectedly caught on.

Inside Kagerou’s heart, a feeling of awe was born.

“Both sides full speed ahead.”

She no longer looked beside her. It was because she knew Akebono was there. Kagerou cut her propeller’s machine.

“Hou 3!” [\[3\]](#)

They turned 30 degrees to the right. She turned at the same time as when she gave the signal. She was relieved, as she thought they would bump into each other but they didn’t. Akebono was perfectly in the same position.

“Q Hou!”

This time they cut 45 degrees to the left.

As expected, Akebono followed.

“Hou 1! Both sides half speed ahead!”

As they turned ten degrees to the right, they dropped the propeller to half speed. Akebono remained in her fixed position.

“Both side first battle speed ahead! Hou 2! 4 Hou! Sei 130!” [\[4\]](#)

After they increased the speed, they turned 20 degrees to the right, then 40 degrees to the left. The last one was a malicious true bearing 130 degrees simultaneous turning to the right, however there was no indication of Akebono falling behind.

After that, they did synchronized maneuver numerous times, but Akebono maintained their gap and there was no misdirection until the end.

They returned to the place where the other fleet girls watched. For some reason, they applauded them.

Half surprised and half astonished, Kagerou said to Akebono.

“You.... are amazing huh.”

“Hmph.”

Akebono seemed bored.

“Destroyers should not get left behind in synchronized maneuver now, can’t they.”

“But today is the first time for me to team up with Akebono. Usually mistakes happen. For you to be able to keep up from the first try, not even Kure girls able to do it.”

“Those girls must have no ability.”

“... Hey, Akebono. Why don’t we do it together? With your competence, people will stop looking down on Fourteenth Destroyer Division.”

“I don’t want to get involved with destroyers.”

After replying with that statement, Akebono said, “That’s it for today” and promptly went back.

She left Kagerou and the other four girls by the surface of the sea.

“All of us also go home?”

Satsuki said in a happy-go-lucky statement. Kagerou shook her head.

“Not yet. We’ll redo from line ahead.”

“Eee—”

“Isn’t it frustrating to be lectured by Akebono? That’s why we will train harder.”

Kagerou said to each one of them.

“Satsuki, not only you look only to the front you are always on full speed so drop your speed. Ushio, on the contrary, please look forward. You won’t fall just by not looking at your feet. For Nagatsuki, separate yourself from Arare a bit more.”

“I have decided that I will protect Arare.”

“If you stick with her that much, both of you together may capsized from point blank shot. For Arare... anyway, say something.”

Arare blinked a few times, but it was not certain if she understood it or not.

“.... I will take that as everyone understand. Well then, let’s begin from the beginning.”

In the end, that day’s training was fleet synchronized maneuver from beginning to the end.

As a result...

The five of them had their whole body bruised and hurt, ended up writhing in agony from the muscle pain.

The next day.

Without even a wink of sleep the whole night, Kagerou greeted the morning horn by slipping in between the dreamworld and reality. Overcoming muscle pain, she crawled out of bed and then went for breakfast after getting dressed.

The Destroyer fleet girls ate their breakfast by the gun room within the dormitory. It was essentially used as a cafeteria but traditionally that was what the room was called.

Each Destroyer was given one table. Kagerou and the rest of the Fourteenth Destroyer Division all had their breakfast looking dejected.

Since there were many young girls in the Destroyer class, every table was lively. It's the age where merely a turning reel could make them laugh. Of course, the place was teeming with high pitched voice.

Within that atmosphere, the reason why Kagerou and her team had the face of staying up all night working the day before was because of the result of yesterday's training came in the form of pains here and there. Not only that, it also did not go well. Although it was said that fleet synchronized maneuvers were deep stuff, it was the basic of the basics. If they could not even do it, everything else would definitely follow suit.

Numerous destroyers whispered while throwing their gaze at Kagerou, who made a depressed expression whilst holding back the pain.

When she tried to listen while pretending to look uninterested, she heard rumors such as, "That Kagerou Class, they said she got Akebono shoved into her face" "Uwa, that's the worst."

Although she thought that they were quite right to say so, when they said, "It seems she was so bad in fleet synchronized movement that even Akebono was making fun of her", as expected that pissed her off. Well yeah it was like that, but here we're training like mad. Just you see now!

The hushed talking still continued.

"Right there, they said that's the Fourteenth Destroyer Division."

"I never heard of theeeeeemmmmm!"

"It's made by grouping the leftovers. They're all only that kind of girls, see?"

"Well, they said the nameship of the Kagerou Class is mostly plain anyway."

What a load of bullshit. Just you see if Shiranui was here, we would both will beat you senseless. Using night battle as an excuse, we'll drive you to the sea naked!

But in the end, without her partner, Kagerou could only argue inside her heart.

Today's breakfast was a combination of rice mixed with wheat and taro

(Colocasia esculenta) miso soup. Salted eggplant and nori (seaweed) boiled in soy. This is a job where they move their body but the seasoning was somewhat strong. However since her attention was elsewhere, she could not taste it.

Kagerou thought that at any rate they should do something to somehow restore their position from that of being leftovers.

There was no helping that the Fourteenth Destroyer Division being not only a minor, but also a grouping of leftovers. However it must be possible to rise up from there. When she was in Kure, it was commented that “To add new meaning into the word “willpower”” was the real ability of a fleet girl.

Anyhow, she would like to do something to this funeral-like atmosphere and painful body.

Kagerou was about to say something but instead Akebono was the one to say something quite uncharacteristic of her.

“This mood sucks, doesn’t it.”

She was the only one being lively.

“Why don’t you at least say something? You make this long awaited meal turn bad.”

“... to not have useless conversations during meals is normal.”

Nagatsuki said. Even within the disheartened members, she straightened her back and properly ate her meal.

“Akebono, better shut up and eat.”

“Saying something stupid. I wonder why the Mutsuki Class are always overreaching themselves like that.”

Akebono waved her chopsticks.

“Only having that spirit alone, why don’t you live more appropriately?”

“That is natural.”

“Natural? Aa, so this protecting other ship girl personality has been there since you’re a baby, I see. Must be the influence of things like your mother divorcing your father or domestic violence or those other kinds of things.”

“To protect is a destroyer’s duty. I believe that protecting the weak is what makes up the duty of a warship.”

“A Destroyer is a warship?”

“Don’t you try tripping up somebody. No matter what happens, I will never abandon others.”

Suddenly Akebono’s expression changed. She put her chopsticks on the table.

“This stupid destroyer! People like you who blurt out things they can’t even do are really a pain in the ass!”

Although she seemed surprised by the abrupt change, Nagatsuki replied instantly.

“What’s wrong with protecting the weak?”

“Ha, I know, you see. Even between destroyers, the Mutsuki class are the ones which are the weakest, isn’t it?”

“That has nothing to do with this.”

“That way, we don’t even know if you can even protect anyone!”

“What did you say?”

Nagatsuki raised her voice and stood up.

“I’m different from you! I don’t say things I can’t do!”

“You’ll never be able to!”

They both got between the tables and glared at each other.

With that scene, the whole gun room’s attention was turned to them. Before they knew it conversations were dropped and without continuing their meals, they watched.

It was the same with the other members of the Fourteenth Destroyer Division. Kagerou was horrified and Satsuki’s eyes turned so round. Ushio seemed hesitant while Arare was the only one mechanically brought food to her mouth.

Nagatsuki and Akebono directly faced each other, sparks scattered about. A critical situation. If someone did something as simple as a cough, it seemed like a

fist fight would commence.

Right then, a voice came up from another direction.

“Everyone, good moooooorniiiiing~~!”

The one who came into the gunroom was the secretary ship clad in a blue uniform, Atago.

Frantically the destroyers were about to stand up. Atago raised her hand.

“Aaa~. Be seated, be seated is okay.”

The destroyers who were half-standing up, sat down again. Nagatsuki and Akebono who got their emotions diminished also sat down. Atago stood in the place where everyone could see her easily.

“You may listen while eating, it’s okay. Actually there is something I would like to say to everyone~~”

There was not a single fleet girl who could continue eating after being told like that by the secretary ship. Taking care not to fail in hearing each and every word, they all focused their attention.

“Two weeks after now, there will be a special training targeting destroyers.”

At the sound of “training”, the destroyers went rigid.

“All fleets will join. We will rank you and report the result to the admiral.”

The Gun room exploded with indescribable voices.

It was a mixed of “SUDDENLY?!” or “What a relief it isn’t a sudden examination” or “I’ll win this challenge!”.

In the fleet girls’ training, allies acted as imaginary enemies and by using practice bullets, the accuracy adjudication would commence. From there, results would be calculated and graded. There are also times when they used to target ship opponent and fired live bullets. In order for these experiences to be useful in real battles, these training commenced frequently in each naval base. Using competition between fellow destroyers just like what Atago had said was not uncommon.

The majority of destroyers were elated. Those who favor this kind of method

are exceptionally many between the destroyers. However, the words “special” tugged them from the back of their head.

Atago continued.

“Since common training would be uninteresting, we will join it with expeditions. Each fleet will be assigned on an escort mission, the fleet with the most marks wins.”

“Waaa!” voices were heard.

Expeditions were conducted solely to gain resources. Fleet escort meant protecting the ships and convoys that gathered resources. At a glance it was an easy task so destroyers were used a lot for this.

However, this was more nerve-wracking than training. Although they would rarely encounter the Abyssal Fleet, in one way or another it was still technically a real battle.

Atago then revealed the meaning of particularly calling it “special training”.

“The enemy fleet that will sortie are heavy cruisers and battleships. While controlling the practice, they will also check whether or not you guard well. You shouldn’t let your guard down, okay.”

Hearing the ruckus that occurred, she seemed satisfied.

“It doesn’t stop there. In order to motivate you, we have prepared a splendid prize for those destroyers with good results~!”

“Oooo!” shouts intensified.

“First, for the third place prize, all you can eat voucher for Mamiya-san’s deluxe ice cream~!”

“Waaaaaa!” cheers of delight erupted. Mamiya quality products and sweets, no matter which, have the best taste. There was not a single fleet girl who did not yearn for them.

“For the second place, unlimited meal together alone with Akagi-saaan!”

“O-Ooouuu...” voices came up mixed with doubt. [\[5\]](#)

“And for the first place..... PANPAKAPAAAAAAN!!”

Kagerou whispered to Satsuki.

“Panpakapan?”

“That’s her verbal tick.”

In the same timing as when murmurs saying “that looks like some kind of store reopening..” was heard, Atago announced.

“Calling me Oneechan for a whole life for free!” [\[6\]](#)

Waaaaa clap clap clap clap, she cheered for herself.

The destroyers looked at each other, uneasy. This “wanting to be called Oneechan mannerism” was something that everyone knew. Here and there murmurs saying “didn’t she mistake the third prize with the first?” were heard.

“It seems like everyone is delighted with this, I see.”

The voices that seemed to cry “I wonder....” didn’t reach her.

“The exact date will come later. Until then, please work hard in training!”

While still feeling satisfied, Atago left the room.

The gun room continued the breakfast while still floating in a bubbly atmosphere. “The joke with eating together with Akagi-san is whether we can eat at all or not, huh” or “How exactly do you get the third place?” talks started.

Kagerou also digested Atago’s words in her head.

Is this perhaps a chance? The prizes aside, they was no doubt they would gain prestige. This is a chance to overturn the no name or rather, bad name from Fourteenth Destroyer Division’s image. There was a similar occasion happening in Kure. Together with Shiranui and friends, for the sake of winning they stacked up hard training and the likes.

More than anything, with this, everyone can have her vision joined into one. They can be reborn from the destroyers who can’t even do fleet synchronized maneuvers.

She announced it to everyone on the table with a small voice.

“Everyone, listen. We’re going to take this training. Our goal is first place.”

Satsuki looked puzzled.

“You want to call her Oneechan that much?”

“She had me call her that. But that’s not the case. Aren’t we all destroyer? Of course we’re going in to win.”

“Well, you got a point~”

“Aren’t we being treated like fools and deadweights right now? From this, we can definitely restore that image.”

“Ooo~ aren’t you on fire.”

“Of course. This is a chance for us to make our names known in Yokosuka.”

“I’m okay with it though.”

Satsuki said it while throwing her stare at the other fleet girls.

The objections took a long time. Even then, there were none. The fight Nagatsuki and Akebono just had was still leaving its trace. Ushio, being unable to stop the dispute remained dispirited. Arare had finished her meal and just like a machine losing its battery, she had stopped moving.

Despite it all, Kagerou said.

“It will definitely be okay. If it’s us, we can do it. We’re going to be number one in Yokosuka.”

She made a fist, clenching it tightly. Satsuki was the only one who responded with an “Oooo!”

That day, Kagerou was absorbed in reading materials about sea escort when she got into the private study room before practice. In order to win, one must first deeply understand the target.

When she was in Kure, there were many missions on things like reconnaissance expedition or naval review. This too, in a way was an activity of bringing back resources so it fell into the expedition category. It’s just that she had never done escorting.

“Mmm let’s see here, the bow surface of the ship is their strength. The broadside surface of the ship is their weakness. So that means we have to

protect their broadside.”

While she looked at the really thick book, she mumbled with her mouth.

“In the case of escorting two ships, take the rank and the side position... So it’s ‘protect the side’.”

At the very least she drilled into her head only the parts that may become references, then hurriedly went out of the private study room.

After being absorbed in a last minute cramming for about around an hour, she arrived at the pier. She faced her destroyer comrades lining up before her and said.

“From today we will do convoy escorting practice. Since we’re going to take the top spot in the special training, as expected I guess it is better to practice focusing on it.”

“I wonder if the other destroyers also did something similar..”

Said Satsuki. Since it was logical, Kagerou noted it.

“That’s why we have to train even more than the other destroyers.”

“I am bad at fleet synchronized maneuvers. But I am good at single maneuver.”

“You should overcome that weakness.”

Kagerou said it strongly.

“We’re going to take first place.”

She looked at everyone.

As expected, the question of whether or not they could do it popped up in her mind. The one who seemed to have the will to was Satsuki, but she was also at the level of half spirited, half anxious.

The rest had zero willpower. There were also fleet girls who had nothing but anxiety or displeasure.

“Once again, doing something stupid.”

Akebono said with a skeptic look.

“Is there even a meaning in doing something that you can’t do?”

“If we don’t do it, we will never get better.”

“It’s a waste of time.”

“Akebono may be good at steering control, but the others aren’t.”

“Then why don’t you have it your way.”

Akebono answered like spitting it out. Ushio said, “Akebono-chan...”

Thinking of encouraging everyone, Kagerou sad with a loud voice.

“Then, Fourteenth Destroyer Division shall begin convoy escort training.”

“Yeeeeeeeeees!”

Somehow, there was a voice behind her.

The startled Kagerou quickly turned around. Over there was a smiling Atago.

(picture 095)

Atago lightly waved her hand.

“As expected, a Kure born girl has a different level of spirit! I will see to it fully!”

“A-Atago-san! Why?!”

“It’s Oneechan, no?”

Atago continued after she said it.

“At times to watch over destroyer training is also an important duty. Since there is no one in Kagerou’s fleet so I’m taking it in.”

What the hell... Kagerou lamented. Out of all ships, it just has to be Atago. We can do nothing about having someone to look over us but, it’s like, it would have been better if it was someone with a personality less eccentric.

“But, aren’t you the secretary ship?”

“You don’t have to worry about the Admiral. Because he thought of being spoilt by Akagi-san, he has now becomes Kaga-san’s target practice.”

That admiral, once again doing something as he pleased, cursed Kagerou inside the deepest part of her heart.

Somehow Kagerou thought of regaining back her spirit. Along with the fact that there was someone watching, in order to become number 1 they should practice.

In a convoy escort practice, more than anything they needed something to protect. That was why, Kagerou began preparation.

“I’m bringing this as a replacement for the mock ups, give me a hand lining them up.”

The ones that she brought along were not an elaborately made model of a ship.

It was a doll painted grey. A little bit shorter than human proportion, on its head two gun barrels jutting out, it had a swimming buoy on. On that buoy, from left to right a word [Zekamashi] was written. [\[7\]](#)

Not only one, they were a number of them. Atago muttered, “oh wow, how cute.”

“.... Shikamaze’s... Gun turrets?”

Arare the only one who said it.

“Why.....?”

“They’re dolls. Somehow many of them were left in the storage. More like, there was nothing else but these.”

Kagerou replied. Not only that, there were a great number of them, so she persuaded and borrowed them.

“Why... are these...”

“They’re body pillow!”

The one who answered to that answer was Atago.

“Hugging this while sleeping lets you sleep peacefully. That’s why they were prepared.”

“It looks like something that would make some higher ups mad...”

“It was the Admiral’s suggestion, you see.”

“.....”

The admiral said that sleeping alone made him feel lonely, so these were prepared in case his invitation to sleep together was rejected by all the fleet girls. The many numbers of them was because he had thought of delivering it to other naval base and anchorage. Obviously the distribution was stopped by fleet girls of heavy cruiser class and above so the only resting place for these dolls that have lost their destination was the storage room. Furthermore, the main person in question, Shimakaze, was reported to have went on a wild celebratory dance while shouting, “Rensouhou-chan is increasing!”

Kagerou connected the dolls with a tow rope. The head was a small sized electric dummy which pulled the rope.

“Well then, let’s float them”

Those floated by the sea. Having numerous dolls riding on a swimming buoy with “Zekamashi” written on it lining up, made quite a surreal scenery.

“We’re going to position ourselves according to my directon. Errr.. Myself, Satsuki, and Ushio will be on the right side of the convoy. Satsuki, Arare, and Akebono on the left side, kay.”

While giving unconvinced looks at the dolls, the destroyer fleet girls arrived at their position. Even Akebono who previously voiced complaints, went accordingly with a look of displeasure.

“Somehow Rensouhou is looking this way...”

Satsuki muttered with an eerie feeling.

“Don’t mind it. It’s just a doll so it doesn’t have any conscience.”

“Doesn’t it have this head-like thing drawn on it? It feels like it’s watching us no matter where we go.”

Satsuki trembled.

“Are you the type that is bad at horror stories?”

“Yeah....”

Kagerou was feeling, ‘what a troublesome girl’ but then she got an idea.

“Satsuki, change positions with me.”

“Ee? I will be in the leading position?”

“It’s okay, I’ll be the one giving directions. Just don’t go recklessly running around.”

“Eeee~ It’s better with both sides at full speed.”

To Satsuki who talked nonsense, Kagerou whispered into her ear.

“Rensouhou is looking at you.”

After giving the lead ship position to Satsuki, Kagerou switched on the towing ship.

Giving out a motor sound, the ship began to move. The dolls were pulled forward.

“Everyone, follow Satsuki while maintaining your distance.”

As if being pushed by Kagerou’s words, Satsuki moved forward.

Everyone, even if with slow speeds, cruised alongside the dolls.

Maintaining a convoy, unexpectedly had a certain technique to it. It was not enough to merely look forward, but the distance by the side was also important. Not only that, in order to protect the convoy, they should also pay attention to attacks.

“Begin “No” letter move!”

The towing boat automatically turned starboard. Being pulled, the dolls turned to the right. Just like them, Kagerou also changed direction.

Just a few moments after, they turned to the port side. Carefully they followed suit.

The No (之) letter movement was, in another term, a zig zag movement. Just like the letter E (ㄣ), following the movements going left then right, it’s a way to avoid enemy attacks. It’s particularly effective for attacks by enemy planes, but used in convoys looking out for an ambush is also among its many uses.

The towing ship’s timer moved, turning its rudder for a larger change of direction.

“Keep in line... aren’t you doing great, Satsuki? You’re not rushing even a little

bit!”

Satsuki, positioned at the very front of the line, without being too fast or too slow, advanced forward while maintaining distance.

She did not look behind. She was merely paying attention to her side.

“I kinda get the feeling that I’m being watched...”

“If you run off all by yourself, I’m sure the one who’s watching you will materialize itself...”

While shrieking, “Hie!”, she quickly became more careful.

Kagerou stifled a laughter. If telling her directly wouldn’t work, then it would be better to leave it to the dolls. Of course, the doll didn’t move by itself, but if Satsuki was convinced that way, then it’s okay too.

“You’re doing good, Satsuki. well then, let’s make a bigger movement. Both sides.”

She turned right.

“Port.... Hyaaa?!”

BUMP! Kagerou ran into Ushio.

“Oh come on, don’t destroy the line.”

“I-I’m sorry. You moved so suddenly...”

“It’s No movement. You should do it properly.”

“Excuse me... may I say something?”

Since she said it so timidly, Kagerou answered, “sure.”

After dampening her lips with her tongue, Ushio began to speak.

“Mmm... During convoy escort, you should not move suddenly. Changing the angle gradually, large course changes are made by changing the angles many times.”

Ushio explained with hand movement. Although she was being explained to, Kagerou did not feel upset. Instead, she found it surprising.

“You know it very well.”

“Kagerou-san’s arrangement is according to the “Theory of Convoy battle formation with fleet girls rank positioning”, isn’t it? However, that has been revised. In an Abyssal Fleet encounter, not only just by the sides of the convoy, it was said that it’s better to have the lead of the convoy to also be guarded. There are quite a few cases of being attacked from the front...”

“How very detailed. Have you any experience?”

A bit surprised, Ushio closed her mouth with her hand.

“... well, a bit...”

“Hm, it’s pretty reassuring to have someone experienced with us, since I’ve just read that from a book.”

Kagerou laughed.

“Is there anyone else who wants to state their ideas?”

“If the girls aren’t close with each other, there are a lot of cases where the formation gets disorganized. It’s important that our relationship doesn’t run up dry... like that...”

Ushio moved her glance to her side.

There were Nagatsuki and Arare, going as if they were holding each other.

“Arare, rather than protecting the fleet, I’d protect you.”

“...”

Behind them, Akebono followed while looking at them as if they were fools.

Kagerou quickly called them.

“Nagatsuki, Arare! We’re in No Letter movement right now! You’re gonna crash if you let your guard down!”

Just as she said so, Nagatsuki and Arare fell, it looked as if they were diving towards the doll. Kagerou quickly moved towards the other side.

“Kagerou-san! If you rush, your feet will get caught in the tow rope!”

“Whooooopsie!”

Thanks to Ushio’s words, Kagerou jumped around. The expression of Akebono,

who was silently watching them, turned to disdain.

Kagerou struggled.

“I’m falling! I’m falling!”

“Kagerou-san!”

As all of those happened, Satsuki, drenched in cold sweat, did the No letter maneuver repeatedly under Rensouhou’s watch.

Translator’s notes and References

1. [↑](#) Literal meaning: the girls that make the flowers shy
2. [↑](#) The Japanese navy uses “Red Black” flag to signal rotation speed. Black means plus, Red means minus. Combinations may happen.
3. [↑](#) Hou (方 direction). “Hou [degree]” means going [degree] to the right. “[degree] Hou” means going [degree] to the left
4. [↑](#) Sei 齊 works the same as Hou, just that they will simultaneously turn
5. [↑](#) In case you guys don’t know. *you probably should since you are reading this*. Akagi eats a lot. By a lot I mean. A LOT. So the unlimited part.... Is... extremely questionable. As seen by their reaction
6. [↑](#) 10/10 best prize 2016
7. [↑](#) In case you guys are wondering *then again you should no it already.... probably....* zekamashi is shimakaze read backwards in japanese

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Water

A few days later, on the usual pier.

“We had a bad day yesterday, but let’s put more spirit today!” Kagerou said while facing the girls who lined up.

Their faces did not look like they were listening to her seriously and the tension was really low. But Kagerou did not get discouraged, even a little bit.

“You must be thinking it’ll be another boring training, but you’re wrong! Today we’ll be having shelling training!”

Everyone let out a surprised voice.

Compared to Battleships and Heavy Cruisers, Destroyers’ gun shells were nothing. But that did not mean Destroyers were not useful. There were a lot of cases where escaping Abyssal ships were sunk by Destroyers’ last strike. While it may not really pack a punch but 12,7cm gun was definitely not for decoration. That was why Kagerou trained their shelling power too.

By making request to the navy storage room, they borrowed Abyssal Fleet mock ups. The storage officer had complained, “Lately our expenditure is a bit extreme. So please be careful with It.” but they replied with, “We don’t have a choice. If we change it with rensouhou dolls, Shimakaze will cry.” Setting up Abyssal mock-ups then shooting at them were also often practiced in Kure.

“Now, we’ll be using live ammos.”

Those who heard it answered with an “eh?” together.

Ushio said, “isn’t it dangerous....?”

“Well, there is danger, but everyone has done expeditions, right? You guys bring live ammos too that time, right?”

“Well... yeah...”

All the Destroyer Fleet Girls had done expedition at least once. In those expeditions, there was a chance to encounter Abyssal ships and had to fight-that was the reason why they brought live ammos. So, it was not like they didn't have real combat experience at all, but it wasn't much as they never actually encountered any of the said Abyssal ships. Yes, there were sorties available, but they were not allowed to fully participate in them, thus they never had the chance to point and shoot their cannons before. The special training that Atago had mentioned might had been due to the fear of their inexperience.

"Act as if it was a real battle, it might even better our skills." Kagerou said.

By using live ammunition, they would feel nervous, therefore, as a result, they would concentrate better. Kagerou thought to raise the girls' experience before the actual special training was for the best.

Ushio still felt a bit nervous.

"Do you have permission for this?"

"Don't worry, I already have it." -Kagerou said while she pounded her chest with her fist.

"We've done it a lot in Kure. Don't worry, everything will be fine with me here. It's not like I'm experimenting or doing something new."

"Maa, you're so full of confidence!"

She let out a strange "Hyo!" voice as she turned around.

There was Atago behind her.

"Are you watching us again?"

"You have sent a live ammo use form, right? There must be a Heavy Cruiser or a large ship to observe it. That's why I'm here."

"Isn't it just because the secretary ship doesn't have anything to do?"

"Well, the admiral is currently kneeling to Tatsuta as punishment for trying to touch her breasts, so it's fine... And I also brought some other people."

She pointed to her right. Looking that way, Kagerou jumped subconsciously.

The girls were wearing miko outfits and there were 4 of them, wielding

gigantic, large-caliber cannons. They were obviously battleships. Moreover, they were the Kongou-class sisters.

The one in front suddenly shook Kagerou's hand.

"Haaai, we'll be observing you, okay?"

The one with this distinctive talking style was Kongou.

"Don't make a fool of yourselves in front of nee-sama, okay?"

The one who said that, wholly for the sake of her sister, Hiei.

"Please be careful and avoid getting hurt."

The one who worried about them was Haruna.

"I'm expecting good results from you girls."

The one who said that simply and expectantly was Kirishima.

Looking at the famous fast battleships, Kagerou's breath quickened. Talking about these battleships, they were the main stars of the anti-abyssal fleet, the sea goddesses who protected the people. Their armor gave allies the feel of peace, and their gigantic cannon spelled terror to the enemies. Along with carriers, they were the most valuable and important people in the naval base. Of course, Kagerou had met them several times. She bowed to them when they passed. She pestered them to tell her the stories of their battles against with the abyssal fleets. However, being watched by them while training is a first.

Kagerou protested to Atago: "Why did you bring them...?"

Atago placed a finger on her cheek: "Umm... Because I invited them?"

"Looking at destroyer training isn't fun!"

"That's not true, everyone wants to know how you battle the abyssal fleet..."

But we only have 12.7cm cannons... Kagerou thought. Unlike the battleship who was equipped with 35.6cm and 41cm large-calibre cannons, they were only equipped with small caliber cannons or high angle guns of variable sizes. Well, there was no use to fall into self-despair but it was a cold hard fact that they were nothing compared to them.

But Atago, as if unconcerned about it, shouted "Ganbatte!" while she waved

her hand.

Loomed with dark feelings that threatened to take over, Kagerou shook her head as if saying “No, no! I should consider it as an opportunity. I’ll make the battleships remember us, and raise our names in Yokosuka! If it goes through the Kongou sisters in the naval base, it might even surprise the other destroyers.”

More than that, destroyers had weapons that were not inferior to battleships that weapons that could kill an enemy with one hit.

“O-o-o-o-okay everyone! Don’t shame ourselves in front of the battleships! But do-do-d-don’t be nervous, calm down!”

“But isn’t Kagerou who’s the most nervous?”

Covering her mouth with her hand, Kagerou silently said “shut up” to Nagatsuki who had hit the nail on the head. With a stern stare to them, they scurried to prepare for the live shelling practice.

“I’ll be the one pulling this.” Kagerou said while she pointed to the abyssal ship mock ups.

“When I give you the signal, shoot, okay? When it’s my turn, someone please change with me.”

“I’ll do it.”

Nagatsuki stepped forward and Kagerou nodded.

“Okay, then I’ll head to the open sea.”

“Not, I’ll be the one pulling the target ships.”

“Eh? Nagatsuki wants to do it?”

“Yes.”

She had already started to pull the tow ropes.

“You can leave everything to me.”

“That will help a lot, thanks.”

“Do it as much as you please.”

Before Kagerou could say anything, Nagatsuki went down from the pier.

Is it because of her ability or the speed of the mock ups Nagatsuki pulled, Kagerou was a bit surprised. Calming herself down, she faced the other girls.

“Okay then, I’ll be the first.”

She went down to the open sea and could see Nagatsuki pulling up the mock ups ship. For safety reasons, there’s a pretty big distance between Nagatsuki and the target she towed. Kagerou took aim, measuring the distance and directing the cannon.

“Direct front engagement. Target, enemy abyssal, starting shooting sequence!”

The 12.7cm guns equipped on her shoulder spat out fire. Water splashed just before the target. The angle had been too low. She corrected her aim a little higher.

“FIRE!!”

She shot again. Now the water splashed ahead of the target, her angle was too large.

“Target distance found!” She shouted with pride.

“Woohoo” sounds could be heard from the Kongou sisters who were watching. ‘Finding the target distance’ is done by putting the target between two shots. After doing that, she only needed to shoot between these two angles, so the chance to hit will be higher. Kagerou continued to fire without counting how many shells hit the target. After she had used up all the shells she had, she swam back onto the pier. Nagatsuki did the same, while pulling the target.

They examined the mock ups. Almost half of the abyssal fleet mock-up was hollowed.

“It’s okay...” She said, feeling satisfied after checking the results herself. Atago and the others only gave it a single glance and smiled. What those smiles meant was a mystery.

“Let’s continue. It’s time to shine!” Kagerou said as an encouragement.

Satsuki went forward. “I’ll start my shelling phase!”

With such energetic phrase, 12.7 cm shells started to fly. With a good pace,

Satsuki continued to shoot. Water splashed around the target. For those who watched it, it looked like a big water fountain. Before Kagero could say anything and it wasn't long after, Satsuki ran out of ammo and stopped her shelling. The target was pulled back and Kagerou checked the mock ups.

"There's only.... 1 hit!?"

Kagerou blinked several times.

"Hey Satsuki! There's only one hit!"

To Satsuki, it was an achievement and said in a happy voice. "Whoa! It hit! I'm becoming better!?"

"What?!"

"I didn't hit anything last time! Being on target even with just one shell is amazing for me! It must be because you came here!"

"But you wasted all of your ammo. If they strike back, it'll be the end of you. Please be careful with your ammunition too."

Then Kagerou went to the Kongou sisters and gave a forced smile.

"That one was just for entertainment, the others are better than that."

The next one was Ushio.

"I...I'll try my best."

Shelling phase started and just like her soft personality, the shots looked soft too. Like it was a shot but it was without any penetrating power, even the splashes were small. The shelling phase was completed and Kagerou made a complicated expression while checking the result. There's really nothing special to report. It's not good but it's not bad. It was as if the abyssal mock ups were saying "Aah, I've just got shelled" in a mocking tone.

"Hmm... It's not bad... I guess?"

Ushio shrunk with embarrassment, "I'm sorry..."

"No no, you still have room to grow. The next is Akebono?"

Akebono glared at her before she started shelling. Without saying anything and with just a few shots, she was able to find the exact target distance. Without

needing to count, she continued getting hits after hits.

Kagerou was impressed. There's no wasted movement, the correction from the very first shot was very good, too. And she didn't use all of her ammo like Satsuki either.

After checking the mock ups, there were confirmed critical hits.

"You're good!"

"Isn't it obvious? I'm a destroyer after all. Did you think I'll miss?"

She didn't think that, but to think that this ship with such a bad personality was good at both fleet operations and shelling. Kagerou hadn't expected that.

Kagerou took a look at the Kongou sisters to see whether they were impressed or not. The four of them had been sitting on the beach, Kongou with a teacup in her hand.

"Are they surprised to see this...?"

"If they look at this one, they will." Akebono said with a bored voice.

Kagerou panicky turned to her.

The next in line was Arare.

As she's a silent one, she silently headed towards the shooting point. She took a careful look at the abyssal mock ups.

"Fire."

12.7cm shells were launched.

After a bit of silence, the shells reached their target. The result wasn't water, but fire.

Even though they were using live ammo, the magnitude of the explosion was reduced. But to easily tell whether the shell hit or not, they add a lot of magnesium.

The flash was from that. In other words, it had hit the target.

"The possibility of hits is normally below 10%. First shots are used to measure the distance, and to ready for a full salvo. In a real battle, the enemy and allies

are always moving around, so it's much harder to hit.

Even though this was training, it's still under the effects of temperature and wind. Calculating this and that, and making the first shot hit was still not an easy thing. At first she thought it was just luck, but she hit the other mock ups with her first shot too.

Shelling was over and the mock ups were pulled back. There was no need to check the result.

The Kongou sisters were definitely surprised with this. They stared at the mock ups and only Atago smiled as usual.

Arare didn't even show any sign of pride.

Kagerou, without thinking, patted Arare's shoulder.

"That was really cool! You're that good? You've improved a lot than when in Kure!"

"....."

"Everyone will be surprised by that! You'll become the naval base's hero!"

"..."

Whether she was glad or not, it couldn't be read through her expression.

Aside from Arare, Kagerou was really happy. With this, it'll give a good impression to Atago and the fast battleship sisters. Word would spread in the naval base, and everyone would know that they shouldn't mess with the 14th destroyer division.

"Do you think it is going well?"

The one who said that, as if throwing a bucket of icy water on Kagerou, is Akebono. Kagerou replied while pouting, "So? Isn't it you that said that they would be surprised?"

"Well maybe they will be more surprised with the next one."

"Next? Next is... uwah!"

Kagerou hurriedly said to the girl who lined up with the mock ups of the sea, "Sorry! It's Nagatsuki's turn, right?"

Nagatsuki, who was preparing to tidy the mock ups, took a bit of time before she replied. “Nah... I’m good.”

“Ah. You’re angry because I forgot about you even though I made you pull the mock ups? Sorry. I’ll pull it for you, so cheer up, okay?”

Kagerou put her hands together while bowing to Nagatsuki. Nagatsuki shook her head and said: “It’s okay, really. Don’t mind it.”

“Nagatsuki should practice shelling too! Next time I’ll let you be the first, so please...”

Kagerou took the towing rope from Nagatsuki then she pulled it lightly while checking the distance.

“I’ll pull it, when I give you the signal, shoot, okay?”

Leaving Nagatsuki, who looks like she still wanted to say something, in the middle of the sea. After distancing herself from the mock ups, she waved her hands “Shoot now!”

After a while, Kagerou heard the first shot. The shell flew and landed. A column of water shot up.

Right beside Kagerou.

“Kyaa!”

She screamed without restraint. While covered in water, the shockwave from the blast vibrated to her stomach. If she wasn’t prepared, she would’ve puked all her breakfast.

“What the heck!?”

After that, the second and third shots fired. This time, they too fell somewhere far away from the target. The ones after that were always in front of the target.

And then, it landed near Kagerou again.

The impact almost made her fall. Even though it’s a shell from a destroyer, she wouldn’t come out of it unscratched.

“Wait! Wait! Stop! Abort! Abort!”

She raised and waved her hands, but whether Nagatsuki saw it or not, she

didn't know. Nagatsuki shells' always fell somewhere far away from the target.

Kagerou immediately left the abyssal mock up and headed towards the pier. Even with wet clothes, her blood ran to her head and she screamed.

"What the hell are you thinking? I thought I was going to die! Do you hate me that much?"

There was no reply. Kagerou continued to shout.

"Well I scolded you guys, forced you to practice, and maybe am annoying. But is it that much to the point that you wanted to kill me?!"

Still no answer.

Kagerou took a deep breath and looked at Nagatsuki's face. Nagatsuki's face was so pale she could only stand.

"Uh...um...sorry."

"Well... as long as you're sorry...."

"I'm really sorry... It's not like I do it on purpose." She said with a really pale face, while trembling with a really small voice.

Looking at the difference to her usual self, Kagerou forgot all her anger and asked, "What do you mean?"

"It's her real skill..."

That cold line belonged to Akebono. She folded her arms with a bored look.

"This girl, is really bad at aiming. She always act high and mighty but her battle skill is the worst of the worst within destroyers. Whatever she does will always be a blunder. She always say she would protect Arare, but the truth is that she always got protected."

"...."

Nagatsuki looked down in shame. She's really down in the slumps.

Akebono turns to Kagerou. "Now you understand, right? With this fool, of course the battleships will feel bored."

Kagerou looked at Atago and the others. They were talking. What they talked about is unknown. Maybe she shot her allies and they're having a discussion

about that. Naturally, the training would've been cancelled.

Without thinking Kagerou looked at the sky.

"Ugh, with this, the plan is...."

"I'm sorry." Nagatsuki said in a small voice. "I'm sorry." She suddenly ran off. From the pier, she descended to the sea, and disappeared towards Saru Jima (Monkey Island).

"A...Ushio, can you handle the rest?"

"Ye...Yes!?"

"I'm going to chase after her!"

Without waiting for a reply from the panicked Ushio, Kagerou departed into the sea too.

Sarujima (Monkey Island) was a no-man island on the coast of Yokosuka. Even though there were no inhabitants, there was an open area for barbeque and a swimming area. But they were only operable in summer, other than that, it was shut down.

Kagerou, while searching for Nagatsuki, landed on the beach.

Fleet girls getting an emotional shock were not rare cases. To release emotional and physical exhaustion after fighting Abyssal Fleet, there were councillors who help with that on other naval bases. But there were girls that were too embarrassed to consult. The more pride they had, the higher the possibility of feeling embarrassed. Those girls would cry and get troubled without anyone knowing about it. And they loved places without people. Sarujima was a perfect place for them.

"Ah, she's here."

On the corner of the beach, a figure of a cowering girl was seen. Kagerou slowly approached her.

Nagatsuki was hugging her knees and hiding her face.

Kagerou, without saying anything, sat beside her.

And the two stayed like that for a while.

“It’s Kagerou, huh...”

Nagatsuki mumbled while she wept.

“Yeah...”

“What do you think of me?”

“I don’t think much of it. After all, Nagatsuki is Nagatsuki.”

Nagatsuki raised her face. In front of her was the sea.

“... What Akebono said was true after all...”

“... eh?”

“The balance of Mutsuki Class is bad. The gun turret and the mount machine aren’t synching well. As a destroyer, it’s a defect. Especially mine...”

“Is that so...”

“It’s true. I’ve always been troubled about being a failure... My armor is pretty thin too.”

What the fleet girl referred as their armor was, pretty much, their clothing. It looked like a normal sailor uniform, but when battling the Abyssal Fleet, it was the important equipment that protected them from shells.

Every type of ship girl had her own uniform design. Because the allocation was based on their aptitude test, there was no use on wearing someone else’s uniform. If there was any case that one used another’s uniform, it wouldn’t become armor anymore, it would turn into normal clothes.

In order to reinforce and upgrade the Mutsuki-type, they remodelled the clothes several times, but ended up destroying the balance. That was well known.

“Satsuki is like that too. She always does muscle training. It looks like she thinks that if she trains her body well, she’ll be fine even if she got shot.”

So that’s the case, Kagerou thought to herself. I thought she’s just a muscle head, but it turned out there’s meaning behind it.

“She’s a really good girl. But I’m not like that. I asked myself countless time how to overcome it and in the end, I got into this way of talking. I made myself

believe that it's my duty to protect someone. But the truth isn't like that. Because I'm weak, being with other people gives me a sense of safety. Because Arare is so good at shelling, I'm always with her..."

"..."

"Arare always had that "go with the flow" personality, so I always got comforted by her. But when Kagerou came, I became scared. Because it's someone she knew way before she met me. Doesn't that mean her friendship with me will end? It's a funny story, even though I'm the one who keeps on depending on her..."

Nagatsuki raised her head and looked at Kagerou.

"Hey, Kagerou..."

"What is it?"

"Do you want to kick me out of Fourteenth Destroyer Division?"

Kagerou blinked several times. Knowing there wouldn't be any answer, Nagatsuki looked down.

"Yeah, you're right. Because a destroyer with bad balance who can't shoot and only rely on their comrades all the time is just deadweight. It's better if you got scrapped into parts."

"Wait! Wait! Please wait."

Kagerou suddenly put her fingers on her lips.

"No, of course I won't do that. Nagatsuki is an important friend too."

Nagatsuki got puzzled.

".... really?"

"Of course. Even I used to be bad in shelling at first. The worst in Sixteenth Destroyer Division. After a lot of practice, I could stand side by side with the others. So, Nagatsuki can be better too."

"Will I get better at shelling?"

"Yep! There will be times when everyone will be saved because of your shells, I guarantee it!"

Kagerou bumped her chest.

Nagatsuki was silent. Her eyes started to water, so she faced away from Kagerou.

“Is that so...”

She only muttered that. Kagerou gave her hand to Nagatsuki.

“Let’s go back.”

“You go on ahead.”

Nagatsuki said while hiding her face.

Kagerou didn’t force her to come back. Only leaving, “I’ll be waiting” words, Kagerou got into the water from the beach and headed towards the naval base.

Kagerou went back to the pier where they practiced. All Fourteenth Destroyer Division members were there, but out of the others, only Atago left.

“Er... The Kongou sisters are...”

“They’re on a sortie. There are Abyssal Fleets appearing around Nansei Islands. If they don’t do a search and destroy operation now, some of our transport fleet might get hurt.”

“And why is Atago...”

“My job is watching your training!”

She laughed with a grin.

Because this could be recorded as a “failure”, in Kagerou’s head, she even imagined that the actual reason the Kongou Sisters left was because of how bad Nagatsuki shelling was.

Going back to the destroyers, Kagerou talked to Ushio.

“How was it? Going great?”

“Y... Yes... Somehow...”

Even though she said so, her face showed shame. Maybe she’s afraid Akebono might have heard what she wanted to say, Kagerou thought.

“Sorry, I’ll take it from here.”

Then she bumped Ushio's hand and turned around.

"Next is torpedo training!"

All the girls, including Akebono got nervous with those words. Torpedo was the beauty (flowers?) of destroyers. Even they, the small type ships who weren't even deemed important, could become wolves when in torpedo phase.

The variety of torpedoes that they equipped had the strength to blow up even a capital ships in one hit.

Kagerou said with her hands on her hip. "Even if we miss, as long as we're good with our torpedoes, it'll be okay! We can be top ships!"

"Isn't special practice means escorting transport fleets?" Satsuki said.

Kagerou instantly replied. "Because the abyssals will appear, we need torpedo practice. I'll prepare it, so you guys line up again... hm?"

She tilted her head. The mock ups they borrowed were nowhere to be found.

"Ushio, did you returned the mock ups?"

"No... in shelling practice, Arare sunk them all. Since the first shot hit, almost all of the others were hit too, so..." Looking carefully, only the tow rope was left by the pier. All the others were sleeping with the fishes.

"If there are no mock ups, how can we practice...?"

"Well yeah... how about borrowing again?"

But they would be scolded. Just getting scolded was the good case. There were a lot of cases where they were forced to write an apology letter and filing a lot of report and documents.

"Well, well, if that's so, how about me becoming the target ship?"

Atago who watched them said that.

Kagerou was surprised and hurriedly waved her hand.

"Of course not, letting the secretary ship being a target practice is a big no."

"It's fine. Let me become useful for you guys."

Without stopping, she lowered her leg onto the waters, as if sliding. Her

breasts bouncing up and down.

“If you’ve finished preparing, give me a sign, mkay?”

While looking at the smiling Atago, Kagerou let out some words under her breath.

“What to do...”

“But the one who told us to do torpedo practice is Kagerou...” said Ushio.

“But if we don’t put our minds to it as if it’s real...”

“On the contrary, I want to shoot.” Satsuki said.

“Those breast armor are really irritating me.” Without hiding, Satsuki had said that in a voice filled with envy, while looking at Atago. Arare added with a whisper.

“Shoot torpedoes while targeting breast... that’s new...”

“It only takes one hit...”

“What’s with the weird jokes, everyone...” Stuttering, Ushio hurriedly said. With those words, everyone looked at her. Ushio was taken aback.

“What... What is it...”

“The pride of those who have...”

With those words, Ushio covered her breasts with her hands. Kagerou stopped them and said.

“Hey, stop with the weird talk. I’ve decided to go with the torpedo practice, act as if it’s real...”

“Kagerou’s actually one of those who has them...”

“Enough with it! Let’s go!”

Everyone went into the water.

The practice didn’t go 1 person at a time. Compared to shells, torpedos are slow. The enemy could evade them, if they saw it. The most effective way to overcome this weakness was by making several ships launch together.

That’s why practising as a destroyer division was much more effective. The

problem then, was the placement of the torpedo launchers they equipped.

The girls whose torpedo launchers were equipped on their back or arms had it easy-by just bending their body a bit or aiming their arm into the water was enough to shoot the torpedo correctly.

The type-90 torpedos launched by 3/4 tubes torpedo launcher platforms really looked like fish swimming in the water at a really fast speed. The problem arose when they were equipped on their legs. This placement did not allow them to correctly shoot easily. On the other hand, those equipped on their ankle were pretty much ok, but those equipped on their thighs had to make a stance like a hand stand in order to shoot. On the manual, it had said, “When deploying torps, let the launch platform rotate”, but when they were cruising, they cannot let the platforms move otherwise it would affect their balance. If in a real battle, they would be crushed by the Abyssals before they moved in position to shoot. In other words, the girls themselves had to posture their body correctly first rather than rotating their armaments in order to shoot.

“But I’m not in one of those classifications...” Kagerou said while bumping her chest.

Her torp armaments were located on her back, but it had an arm that could move freely. With this, she could launch the torp easily without even the need to go into a specific posture.

Ushio looked at her jealously; her torp armaments were instead located on her legs.

“I, feel embarrassed when launching torps...”

Her torp armaments were facing up, so when she launched the torps, she had to be facing the target. Next, she had to raise her leg extremely high and launch the torps into the waters. Otherwise, she needed to turn her back to the enemy and do the same thing. Both positions allowed everyone to see what’s under her skirt.

“Why don’t you just configure the torp armament to face the front right from the start?”

“If I do that, it will lower the aerodynamics and my sailing speed will

drop....speed is a destroyer's weapon, so...."

Ushio shrunk.

Kagerou pouted as she said, "hmmm."

Showing of skirt or not, for Kanmasus, it was a pretty important matter. Even though these girls fight against missiles and fighter planes, in the end, they are still girls. They might not mind it during battle, but once they were back at base and reminisce about it, they will blush hard.

By the way, Kagerou was wearing spats. Through these kind of details, we can see how well developed a destroyer is.

Akebono, who's listening silently, opened her mouth. "Just don't think about it, easy, right?"

"But...."

"I don't mind it."

She's an Ayanami-class destroyer and the solution she suggested seemed pretty good to Kagerou.

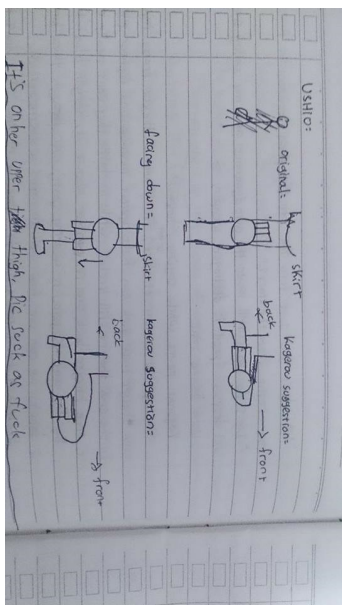
Kagerou thought for a bit before saying, "How about you bow down a bit when you shoot?"

"Yes? Eh??"

Answering Usio question, Kagerou explained.

"If you face the opening of the torpedo launcher downwards, it won't affect the aerodynamics right? When you shoot, bend your knees as if you are kneeling, then it will aim forward, right? If you set it upwards, then you will have to face backwards before shooting.

"Ah I get it!"



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arrangements/formations
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Ushio's face lit up, but turned anxious in seconds.

"To kneel and shoot....it looks like.....meeting the parents on the other side.....the abyssal will misunderstand."

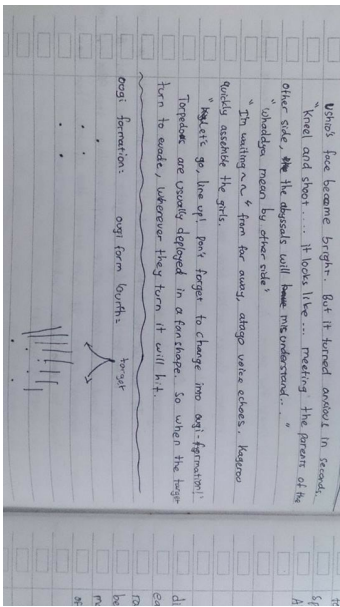
"Whadaya mean by the 'other side'?"

"I'm waiting~~" Atago's voice echoed from a distance. Kagerou quickly assembled the girls.

"Let's go, line up! Don't forget to change into Ougi-formation!"

Torpedoes were usually deployed in a fan shape...so whichever way the target turned to evade, they will be hit.

Kagerou gave Atago the "we will do it" sign.



More “Art”

“Target, heavy cruiser Atago. Direction okay, route okay, torpedo launch platform fuse set to automatic.”

They all lined up and continued one by one. They’re close enough to see Atago clearly.

“Shoot!”

Shuuu, the sound of compressed air being fired. The torpedos launched from the girl and headed towards Atago.

Kagerou took a deep breath and looked at them go.

Then Atago made a big X mark with her arms.

“You missed.”

“A...”

Kagerou still felt disappointed even though the chance of torpedos hitting enemy was only around 10%. Raising it through this type of special practice, she thought they should have hit more. However, having all the torpedoes missing was just too much.

“Maybe we missed the timing.”

“Or maybe it’s because our launch position was too different from each other.” The one who said that is Satsuki.

Because the 14th Destroyer Squadron was filled with ships of different types,

their position while launching torpedos differed from each other. There were those who shot while standing, sitting, raising their arm and even raising one leg. In this case, it's much better if they were of the same type. It's would be so much easier to match the timing, resulting in a raise of battle results and proficiency.

"That's why I said there's no need to be embarrassed!" Akebono said while pouting.

"Rather than kneeling every time, isn't it faster to just raise your legs?"

"But...."

Ushio face became red. Akebono didn't give her mercy.

"You are just too self-conscious! What good would it do for ship girls? Do you want to get eaten by abyssal? You really didn't do anything at all. Since that day, you have never been useful at all."

Ushio became teary eyed, trying to object what Akebono said.

Then Kagerou came and separate them.

"Okay okay, that's enough. Please don't complain at every little thing, Akebono."

"Huh...?"

Akebono whispered as if she was uninterested.

"No matter how many painful experience you have been in, there are those that won't heal."

Kagerou became a bit bothered by those words, but decided not to question it any further.

"Let's do it again."

They lined up again and once again signalled Atago.

"We'll do it again."

"This time, let's get closer before we shoot."

"Eh....Even though it's not night battle?" Satasuki said.

Kagerou approved the truth in her words. "Yeah, and because we suck at this,

we will get close as much as possible. It's much easier to hit if we are closer after all."

"On the other hand, we will be the ones who get hit." An objection was raised.

"Yeah we will, but to be on the top, we should be able to do this."

"Both sides, advance, 1st battle speed."

Following along Kagerou's orders, everyone advanced. Even though they sighted Atago's at a distance, they kept advancing. They kept going till their eyes could finally see her clearly.

".....Shoot!"

Shouu. The sound of compressed air once again released. Once they launched their torpedos, they turned around quickly to get away. It's a manoeuvre to evade enemy counter attacks. When they were far enough, Kagerou turned around to see how they went. Atago, like before, made an X mark again.

"Ahhh....:" Kagerou slapped her palm on her forehead.

"Huuh....we missed again..."

Missing 2 times consecutively was pretty embarrassing. If it was in real battle, it's was definitely not rare for them to miss, but at the least in training, she thought it would hit. And real battles are much more difficult and crueller than training.

"Ushio shot hers perfectly." Satsuki said.

"But she's crouching, it's a bit weird...."

"Please don't say it....I'm trying hard to conquer my embarrassment," Ushio said with cheeks blushing. Then Atago came.

"The result isn't good huh...."

"Sorry....Do you have any insight? Does the launch distance a bit weird?"

Atago put her finger on her forehead. "Hmm....I don't think there's any problem with it, but as for the launch stance, I guess... considering the different types, its fine."

When they thought about it later, they guessed it was supposed to be a joke

and felt how Ushio had felt.

“However some of the important torpedos were shot a bit late. If you don’t launch them together, the chance of hit will be lower.”

Kagerou turned.

“Is there anyone who shot their torpedoes a bit late?”

The destroyers looked at each other and fell into silence, then a hand slowly raised.

“.....Arare?”

Arare slightly nods.

“My torpedo launch platform....isn’t in good condition....so, slow...”

“From the first time?”

Arare affirmed Kagerou’s question.

Yes...”

“Say that earlier won’t you..?”

“Said it.....” Arare whispered.

“The voice must have been small.” Atago said.

Arare voice was small, and to top it off, she never said anything she deemed unimportant. It wasn’t a problem when they’re on land, but it wasn’t the case when they were out at sea. It’s important to speak loudly. Usually they are using wireless radio to speak with each other, but in a real battle, the sound of blasting guns interfered, not to mention the abyssal screaming and wailing. Thus there were many cases where they couldn’t hear each other, so at the very worst, they had to shout into the mike.

Because they always screamed, the mike frequently broke down and so the suppliers reduced the sensitivity of the mike. As a result of this, it wouldn’t receive anything that was said with a small voice.

“Even though you are that good at shooting....Hey Arare, try saying ‘torpedo launched.’”

Obeying Kagerou, Arare opened her mouth to speak.

“.....Torpedo launched.”

“Once again.”

“Torpedo launched.”

Kagerou tilted her head slightly.

“Hmm....If it’s like this, we can hear you even with such a small voice.”

Atago was lost in thought for a second and then suddenly clapped her hands and said.

“Hey Kagerou....would you listen to big sis’s request?”

“Who the heck is ‘big sis’?”

“Aah, don’t tease me, I will be the one training Arare.”

“Eeh?Even though you are the secretary ship?”

“It’s a onetime deal.”

Atago pulled Arare, who was standing idly by, to the opposite side of the wharf, where the sand was.

With this, there were only 4 of them left in Kagerou’s team.

“Isn’t it okay to call it a day now?” Akebono said.

Kagerou shook her head.

“No, it’s not, we gotta train by ourselves. Especially after Atago is lending us a hand.”

“She’s just spending her free time, isn’t it?”

“Let’s just do the torpedo launching practice again.”

Even though they had different poses, they should, at least, be able to shoot with the same timing.

The torps they used just now had already been recovered. Torps are expensive, so they shortened the range in practice to make sure they don’t sink and lost.

“There’s only 4 of us, but let’s just do whatever we can. ‘Kay, both sides, 1st

battle speed.”

For a while after that, they lined up and launched, lined up and launched, again and again.

While they did that, they became accustomed to it. Even with different poses, they became more and more synchronized. Even Ushio forgot all about her embarrassment and silently gave it her all.

However for Kagerou, it’s much more surprising to see Akebono still with them.

“I thought you would say, ‘I am going home,’ again in the middle of practice.”

“You guys suck, so I figured I will stay and use this to laugh at you guys later.”

Well, Akebono’s shooting and torpedo launching skills were at a high level. There were many times when they thought, “if only she had a good personality too”.

Kagerou took a quick look too see what the time was.

“It’s about time we stopped.”

“Nagatsuki and Arare?” Satsuki asked.

Kagerou took a look around for a while.

“I guess Nagastuki is home by now, and Arare.....I will take a look.”

After sending the others home, Kagerou immediately headed towards where Atago was.

Atago and Arare were standing on the beach doing something.

“?”

They weren’t actually doing any shooting or torpedo launch training. They were only standing in front of the sea, lined up. Walking towards them, Kagerou asked, “Er....we’re going to end today’s training.... what are you two actually doing?”

“A spell to raise your morale.”

“Spell...?”

“Well, let’s do it once again, Arare, stand beside me.”

Without letting her choose whether she wanted to or not, she forced Arare to stand beside her.

“Ookay, now take a deep breath.”

Atago took a deep breath. Arare did the same.

“PAN PAKA PA~~N!”

Kagerou stood shocked while Arare was drowned out. Atago pouted.

“C’mon, shout it out!”

“....”

“If you are able to make speaking loudly a habit, people will have to look at you. It’s really important.”

Rather than refusing to do that, Arare made a confused expression at what had just happened.

And of course, Atago ignored that and made Arare face the sea and shouted.

“Ookay, once again, pan paka pannnnnnn!”

“Pa...paka....”

“Pan paka pannnnnnn!”

“Pa.....paka.....”

Compared to the ever cheerful Atago, Arare’s voice got weaker and weaker. Kagerou took a glance to her back. Kanmusu that passed were whispering to each other.

“Looks like she’s being played around by Atago.”

“Uwa, that looks troublesome,” someone said while laughing.

Arare who’s usually expressionless started to look a bit sad. The skin around her nape began to turn red.

Kagerou glared at the girls that passed by and then back at Arare again.

She approached the 2 of them.

“Hey Arare.”

“...?”

Arare looked at her.

“Let’s do it together!”

“Why would....Kagerou....”

“Well, I feel like my voice has been getting softer....”

Kagerou lined up beside Arare and linked their arms together.

“Let’s chase the small voices away.”

“Let me join in too.” A strange voice was heard.

It belonged to Nagatsuki. It seemed like she just got back from the Sarujima and she was breathing a bit heavily.

“Even though I am bad at shooting, I won’t lose to you in voice. That’s the only thing I have to be able to help Arare with.”

After hearing that, Kagerou smiled a bit.

“That’s wonderful, with 3 people, it won’t be embarrassing.”

“Fufufufu~,” Atago laughed.

“With this, our voice will surely reach beyond the horizons. Now, let’s shout till the Kanmusu across the sea hears us! PAN PAKA PAA~~N!”

“Pa....panpaka....pan”

Arare’s voice was still as small as ever. Kagerou, as if trying to cover for her, let out her own voice.

“Pan paka pan! If you use my voice as a cover, it won’t be embarrassing!”

“I won’t lose! Pan paka pan!”

Nagatsuki shouted too. As if doing it in turn, Arare shouted too.

“Pan paka pan....”

“Pan paka pan!”

“Pan paka pan!”

This 'training' lasted till the sun had set.

Night.

After all that, Kagerou's voice was reduced to barely a croak. As if dragging her feet, she headed towards the study room and pulled the chair heavily, sat and laid her head on the desk.

With training and all that 'pan paka pan', she's not only tired physically, but her throat also hurts. Even if the 'pan paka pan' thing didn't really improve anything for her, she still stuck till the very end.

After being dead tired for a while, a sort of fire called "will" flared from deep inside her heart and she raised her body slowly. She pulled out some stationaries and a fountain pen from the drawer and lined them up on the table.

Kagerou stared blankly at the paper that would become a means of communication and the writing apparatuses that would become tools to transmit feelings.

She wanted to send a letter to Shiranui and was planning to send a letter to her right after she arrived at the naval base. However, a lot happened and she didn't even have the time to remember to do it...until now.

There was no sign that Shiranai sent one, but she's always been the type that doesn't do that, so there was no use worrying about it at all.

The stationary wasn't a problem, but a fountain pen for a girl was a bit over the top. Because they say, "A Kanmusu should be a model for all girls", they had to use the distributed writing tools. In the past, there was even training to write kanji.

Of course, there are telephones in the naval base. Even girls had their own phones and smart phones, but it's just that they only had few chances to use them. They were limited in their usage of it.

This happened because the higher ups didn't like girls talking behind their backs. Officially, they said it's a preventive measure to limit the spread of information to the outsiders, but the girls thought that it was more like, "a father who checks his daughter" kinda thing.

And so, the most viable option to contact each other was through a letter.

Even a letter should be concise and business-like. There were a lot of cases where girls would write a lot until it looked like a manuscript for a short novel, but ended up only having 1 page being sent by the naval base.

Kagerou wasn't writing a love letter to her boyfriend, or a missive to a new secret religion, or trying to leak sensitive sortie details to the abyssal. She planned to write a normal letter.

"To my beloved, Shiranui."

As soon as she wrote that, she tore the paper, crumpled it, and threw it into the trash can. However, she missed, so she got up, picked it up and put it inside the trash can.

She felt it was way too formal. They used to be partners, so it should be more like a text message.

"Shiranui-cchi~~"

Crumpled. Who the hell is Shiranui-cchi? She had never called her that before.

"Dear Madam,

In this clear, beautiful autumn season, how do you-"

It was too formal again. She crumpled it and threw it away.

"Ye-ay!gOoDmOrNiNg!"

What the hell was that? It was thrown away.

After that, Kagerou tried a lot more writing styles, ripped them apart and threw them away.

Inside of each, it looked as if a novelist was trying to find her style, but in the end they became inhabitants of the trash can.

Because of the exhaustion from the training, whatever she did, her head didn't work. Because of the hours spent shouting 'pan paka pan', her head felt like a pachinko store during a sale. Her throat was parched as well.

After adding more and more goat feed (paper), she finally returned to her usual way of talking.

[How's Kuro? Here, it's...]

After thinking for a bit, she continued.

[...the worst.]

It's a bit negative, but who cared, she thought to herself.

[Destroyers are of the lower part of the hierarchy. The secretary ship is a weirdo and the admiral is pretty messed up too. The salty wind feels gross, there must be oil mixed up in it.]

She didn't think she would write that much, but the bad things kept flowing out onto the paper.

[Arare had bad influence and became much more silent. It's even questionable whether this is a naval base or not. I am always the one stuck with the short end of the stick, so much that I could cry. I always thought of Shiranui. I want us to be in the same division again.]

Kagerou was so fired up she didn't even realise that there were people behind her.

"Kagerou."

"Eh, ah? What?"

She swivelled around. The one behind her is Hagatsuki, and Arare beside her. She held a bag in her hand.

"A letter? Did we disturb you?"

"N...No, it's okay, what's up?"

Nagatsuki cleared her throat.

"Today, I have troubled you so much, sorry for making you put up with my egoism."

"Nah, it's okay, we are in the same division, right?"

"Because of Kagerou, I could understand my stupidity. I won't give you any more trouble. I promise."

Then she nodded to Arare.

"Here...."

Arare gave Kagerou the item inside of her bag.

“Today, you stayed with me till the end...a present.”

“A gift? You are giving it to me?”

Arare nodded.

“Nagatsuki and I picked it up together....”

Kagerou blinked with surprise.

“Thank you...”

“The one who should say that....is us....”

Arare awkwardly bowed to her.

“Thank you....”

“Let me express my gratefulness too. Thank you very much.”

Hagatsuki bowed to her too and with that, both of them left the self-study room.

Kagerou took a look at what they gave her.

It was a MamiyaYoukan.

Among Mamiya products, Youkan was the best among the best. Even though Mamiya product’s popularity beat all other brands, the only ones with the special privilege to taste them are Kanmusus. They even held contests for it so they wouldn’t be distributed recklessly.

Kagerou cut the end of the Youkan and ate just a little of it.

A gentle sweet taste filled her mouth.

A bit after she tasted it, she picked up her fountain pen and finished writing her letter.

[But I will work hard. Please watch over me from Kure.]